A Saint Indeed;

OR,

The great work of a Christian *Opened* and *Pressed*;

from *Prov.* 4. 23.

BEING

A seasonable and proper expedient for the recovery of the much decayed Power of Godliness among the Professors of these times.

By *John Flavell* M. of the Gospel.

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unusquisque a deo constitutus est sui cordis tanquam castri custos & defensor contra suos hostes: Si ergo non implorato auxilio, non exspectato succursu, adeo ad primam obsidionis castrametationem castrum tradat hosti crimen admittit proditionis manifestum: quid igitur dicendum de traditione clavium, hujus castri, antequam obsidione prematur? clavis est cogitatio, hæc enim cor aperit; cogitationem volvere est clavem cordis ad apertionem ipsius torquere, ut tandem reseratur. Ames. de Conscien. p. 154.

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The Epiſtle Dedicatory.

To my dearly beloved and longed for, the Flock of Jeſus Chriſt in *Dartmouth*, over whom the Holy Ghoſt hath made me an Overſeer: ſound Judgement, true Zeal, and unſtained Purity is heartily wiſhed.

My Dear Friends.

Here are three ſad ſights with which our eyes ſhould continually affect our hearts. The (1.) *Is to behold in every place, ſo many prophane and diſſolute ones who bear the very image of Satan: the face of whoſe converſation plainly diſcovers what they are, and whither they are going,* Philip. 3. 18, 19. *Theſe look like themſelves, the children of wrath: The* (2) *is to ſee ſo many curſed hypocrites artificially diſguiſing themſelves, and with marvellous dexterity acting the parts of Saints, ſo that even a judicious eye may ſometimes miſtake the* Similer workings *of the Spirit on them, for his*

ſaving *working on others: to hear ſuch a perſon conferring, praying, bewailing his corruptions, and talking of his experiences; would eaſily perſwade a man to believe, that he hath the heart as well as the face of a ſincere Chriſtian: For*

Sic oculos, ſic ille manus, ſic ora ferebat.

So the people of God do ſpeak, ſo they pray, and even ſo they open their conditions: theſe look like Saints, but are none. The (3) *is to ſee ſo many real Saints in whom the Spirit of truth is, who get through the impetuous workings of their corruptions, and neglecting of the watch over their hearts, do often fall into ſuch ſcandalous practiſes, that they look like Hypocrites, though they are not ſo.*

Theſe are three ſad ſights indeed, and Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes fountains of tears, that I might weep abundantly over them all!

For the firſt I would mourn heartily, conſidering that they (ſo continuing) muſt be damned eternally. 2 Theſ. 1.8, 9. 1 Cor. 6.9.

For the ſecond, I would both weep and tremble conſidering that they (ſo abiding) muſt be damned doubly, Matth. 24. 51.

And for the third, no leſs than any of the reſt, becauſe though they themſelves may and ſhall be ſaved, yet their examples make faſt

the

the bonds of death upon both the former; Mat. 18. 7. 2 Sam. 12. 13, 14.

Alas! that ever they ſhould ſhed the blood of others ſouls, for whom Chriſt ſhed his own blood! that ever they ſhould be cruel *to others, who have found Chriſt ſo* kind *to them! I know they dare not do it directly and intentionally, but ſo it proves occaſionally and eventually. Suffer me here to digreſs a little, and expoſtulate with theſe prejudiced and hardened Souls, I will preſently return to you again. O why do you miſchief your own Souls by other mens examples? becauſe they ſtumble and break their ſhins, will you fall and break your necks? I deſire all ſuch as harden themſelves by theſe things, and take up a good opinion of their own deplorable condition, would ſoberly conſider and anſwer theſe three Queries.*

1. Q1. *Doth Religion any way countenance or patronize the ſinful practices of its Profeſſors, or doth it not rather impartially and ſeverely condemn them? It is the Glory of the Chriſtian Religion that it is pure and undefiled,* James 1. 27. *no Doctrine ſo holy,* Pſal. 19. 8. *nor doth any make more proviſion for an holy life,* Titus 2. 11, 12. *Indeed there is a caſe wherein we may charge the evil practices of men upon their Principles, but that is when their practices naturally flow*

from, and necessarily follows their principles: as for example; if I see a Papist sin boldly, I may charge it upon his principles, for they set pardons to sale, and so make way for loosness. If I see an Arminian *slight the grace of God, and proudly advance himself, I may cry shame upon his principles, which directly lead to it; but can I do so where such practices are condemned and provided against by their own avowed principles which commit them?*

2. Q. *Is it not a most irrational thing to let fly at religion because of the scandalous waies of some, whilst in the mean time you wholly slight and overlook the holy and heavenly conversations of many others? are all that professe Godliness loose and careless in their lives? No, some are an ornament to their profession, and the glory of Christ: and why must the innocent be condemned with the guilty? why the eleven for one* Judas?

3. Q. *If you condemn religion because of the scandalous lives of some that professe it: must you not then cast off all religion in the world and turn down-right Athiests? surely this is the consequent of it: for what religion is there, but some that profess it walk contrary to that their profession: and then as* Constantine *told the* Novatian, *you must set up your Ladder and go to Heaven by your self.*

But

But alas! it is not our printed Apologies for Religion, but the viſible reformations of its Profeſſors that muſt both ſalve its honour, and remove thoſe fatal ſtumbling blocks at which the blind world ſtrikes and falls into eternal perdition.

Now there are two waies by which this may be effected. First, by convincing the conſciences of Profeſſors of their miſcarriages, and the evil and aggravations of them. Secondly, by medicating the heart, and cleanſing the fountain whence they proceed: in the firſt of theſe, a worthy and eminent ſervant of Chriſt hath lately laboured, holding a clear Goſpel-glaſs before the faces of Profeſſors which truly repreſents their ſpots and blemiſhes. If he that reads it, will conſider, apply, and practiſe, it ſhall doubtleſs turn to his Salvation, but if it turn to no good account to him that reads it; I know it ſhall turn to a teſtimony for him that wrote it. The ſecond is a principal deſign of this ſmall Treatiſe, the ſubject whereof is exceeding weighty, and of daily uſe to the people of God, though the manner of handling it be attended with many defects and weakneſſes: every one cannot be excellent who yet may be uſeful.

See Goſpel-Glaſs.

I will exerciſe your patience no longer than whilſt I tell you.

1. *Why I published it to the view of the World.*

2. *Why I direct it particularly to you.*

First for the publication of it, take this sincere and brief account, that as I was led to this subject by a special providence, so to the publication of it by a kind of necessity: the providence at first leading me to it was this: A dear and choice friend of my intimate acquaintance being under much inward trouble upon the account of some special heart disorder, opened the case to me, and earnestly requested some rules and helps in that particular, whilst I was bending my thoughts to that special case, divers other cases of like importance (some of which were dependent upon that consideration) occurred to my thoughts and this Scripture which I have insisted upon, presented it self, as a fit foundation for the whole discourse, which being lengthened out to what you see, divers friends requested me to transcribe for their use, divers of the Cases here handled: and some others begg'd me to publish the whole, to which I was in a manner necessitated, to save the pains of transcribing, which to me is a very tedious and tiresome work; and just as I had almost finished the Copy, an opportunity presented and that somewhat strangely) to make it publick. So that from first to last I have been carried

ried beyond my first intentions in this thing.

Obj. *If any say, the world is even cloyed with Books, and therefore though the discourse be necessary, yet the publication is needless.*

Sol. 1. *I answer, there are multitudes of Books indeed, and of them many concern not themselves about root truths, and practical godliness, but spend their strength upon impracticable notions, and frivolous controversies: many also strike at root truths, and endeavour to undermine the power of Godliness: and some there are that nourish the root, and tend to clear and confirm, to prepare and apply the great truths of the Gospel that they may be bread for souls to live and feed on: now, though I could wish that those that have handled the pen of the Scribe, had better imployed their time and pains than to obtrude such useless discourses upon the world, yet for Books of the latter rank, I say, that when Husbandmen complain of too much corn, let Christians complain of too many such Books.*

2. *And if you be so highly conceited of your own furniture and ability, that such Books are needless to you; if you let them alone they will do you no hurt, and other poor hungry souls will be glad of them, and bless God for what you despise and leave.*

Ob. *If it be said that several of the cases here handled touch not your condition: I answer,*

Sol. 1.

Sol. 1. *That which is not your condition may be anothers condition. If you be placed in an eaſie, full and proſperous ſtate; and ſo have no need of the helps here offered to ſupport your heart under pinching wants, others are forced to live by faith for every daies proviſion: if you be dandled upon the knee of providence, ſome of your brethren are under its feet. If you have inward peace, and tranquility of Spirit, and ſo need not the Councels here given to ward off thoſe deſperate concluſions that poor afflicted ſouls are ready to draw upon themſelves at ſuch a time; yet it may be a word in ſeaſon to them, and they may ſay as* David *to* Abigail, *bleſſed be thou of the Lord, and bleſſed be thy advice.*

2. *That may be your condition ſhortly, which is not your condition for preſent: ſay not thy Mountain ſtands ſtrong, thou ſhalt never be moved: there are changes in the right hand of the moſt High, and then thoſe truths which are little more eſteemed than Hedge-fruits, will be as apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver: In* Jer. 10. 11. *The Prophet there teaches the Jews (who then dwelt in their own houſes) how to defend their Religion in* Babylon, *and what they ſhould ſay to the* Caldeans *there, and therefore that verſe is written in* Caldee. *So much for the reaſons of its publication: Next for the*

the Dedication of it to you, I was induced thereto by the conſideration. (1.) *Of the relation I have to you above all the people in the world: I look upon my gifts as yours; my time as yours, and all the Talents I am entruſted with as yours: It is not with you as with a woman whoſe Husband is dead, and ſo is freed from the Law of her Husband, the relation ſtill continues, and ſo do all the mutual duties of it.* (2.) *By the conſideration of my neceſſitated abſence from you, I would not that perſonal abſence ſhould by inſenſible degrees, untwiſt (as uſually it doth) the cord of friendſhip, and therefore have endeavoured (as abſent friends uſe to do) to preſerve and ſtrengthen it by this ſmall remembrance. It was* Veſpaſian's *anſwer to* Appollonius *when he deſired acceſs for two Philoſophers: My Doors (ſaid* Veſpatian*) are alwaies open to Philoſophers, but my very breaſt is open to thee, I cannot ſay with him, my doors are open for the free acceſs of friends, being by a ſad providence ſhut againſt my ſelf; But this I can ſay, my very breaſt is ſtill open to you; you are as dear to me as ever.* (3.) *Another inducement (and indeed the main) was the perpetual uſefulneſs and neceſſity of theſe truths for you, which you will have continual need of: and I know few of you have ſuch happy memories to retain, and I cannot be al-*

waies

wayes with you to inculcate these things, but litera scripta manet; *I was willing to leave this with you as a Legacy; as a Testimony of sincere love for, and care over you: This may counsel and direct you when I cannot, I may be rendred useless to you by a civil or natural Death; but this will out-live me, and O that it may serve your souls when I am silent in the dust!*

To hasten now to a conclusion, I have only these three requests to you, which I earnestly beseech you not to deny me; Yea, I charge you, as ever you hope to appear with comfort before the great Shepherd, do not dare to slight these requests. (1.) *Above all other studies in the world, study your own hearts: waste not a minute more of your precious time about frivolous and sapless controversies; it is reported even of* Bellarmine *(how truly I examine not)* quod à studiis scholasticæ theologiæ averteretur ferè nauseabundus, quoniam succo carebant liquidæ pietatis, *(i. e.) he turned with loathing from the study of School-Divinity because it wanted the sweet juice of Piety: I had rather it should be said of you, as one said of* Swinkfeldius *(*He wanted

Fuligattus in vita Bellar.

Caput regulatum illi defuit cor bonum non defuit.

ed a regular head, but not an honeſt heart;) *then that you ſhould have regular heads, and irregular hearts: My dear flock, I have according to the grace given me, laboured in the courſe of my miniſtry among you, to feed you with the heart-ſtrengthening bread of practical Doctrine, and I aſſure you, it is far better you ſhould have the ſweet and ſaving impreſſions of Goſpel-Truths, feelingly, and powerfully conveyed to your hearts; then only to underſtand them by a bare ratiocination, or a dry ſyllogiſtical inference: Leave trifling ſtudies to ſuch as have time lying on their hands, and know not how to imploy it: Remember you are at the door of Eternity, and have other work to do; thoſe hours you ſpend upon heart-work in your cloſets, are the golden ſpots of all your time, and will have the ſweeteſt influence into your laſt hour: Never forget thoſe Sermons I preached to you, upon that ſubject, from* 2 Kings 20. 2, 3. *Heart-work is weighty and difficult work, an error there may coſt you your ſouls: I may ſay of it, as* Auguſtine *ſpeaks of the Doctrine of the Trinity,* Nihilo facilius aut periculoſius erratur; *a man can erre in nothing more eaſily or more dangerouſly: O then, ſtudy your hearts.* (2) *My next requeſt is, that you will carefully look to your Converſations, and be accurate in all your*

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waies, hold forth the word of life: be sure by the strictness and holiness of your lives, to settle your selves in the very consciences of your enemies. Remember that your lives must be produced in the great day, to judge the world, 1 Cor. 6. 2. Oh then what manner of persons ought you to be! You have many eyes over you, the Omniscient eye of God, that searches the heart and reins, Rev. 2. 23. The vigilent eye of Satan, Job. 1. 7, 8. The envious eyes of enemies, that curiously observe you, Psal. 5. 8. The quick and observant eye of Conscience, which none of your actions escape, Rom. 9. 1.

Oh then be precise and accurate in all manner of conversation: keep up the power of Godliness in your Closets and Families, and then you will not let it fall in your more publick imployments, and converses in the world: I have often told you, that it is the honour of the Gospel, that it makes the best Parents and Children; the best Masters and Servants; the best Husbands and Wives in the World.

My third and last request is, that you pray for me: I hope I can say, and am sure some of you have acknowledged, that I came at first among you, as the return and answer of your Prayers: And indeed so it should be, see Luke 10. 2. I am perswaded also, I have

have been carried on in my work by your prayers: 'tis *ſweet when* 'tis *ſo, ſee* Epheſ. 6. 18, 19. *And I hope by your prayers to receive yet a further benefit, even that which is mentioned,* Heb. 13. 18, 19. Philem. 22. *And truely it is but equal you ſhould pray for me, I have often prayed for you: Let the Pulpit, Family and Cloſet witneſs for me: And God forbid I ſhould ſin againſt the Lord in ceaſing to pray for you.*

Yea, friends, your own intereſt may perſwade to it: what mercies you obtain for me, redound to your own advantage, if God preſerve me, it is for your uſe and ſervice: the more gifts and graces a miniſter hath, the better for them that ſhall wait on his Miniſtry: the more God gives in to me, the more I ſhall be able to give out to you. I will detain you no longer, but to entreat you to accept this ſmall teſtification of my great love and have recourſe to it, according as the exigencies of your condition ſhall require: Read it conſideringly, and obediently; Judge it not by the dreſs and ſtile, but by the weight and ſavour of what you read. 'Tis *a good Rule of Bernard,* in legendis libris, non quæramus ſcientiam ſed ſaporem, (i. e.) *in reading Books, regard not ſo much the ſcience, as the ſavour: That it may prove*

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the savour of life unto life to you, and all those into whose hands it shall come, is the hearty desire of

Your loving and
faithful Pastor,

JOHN FLAVEL.

From my Study
at Ley *in* Slapton,
Octob. 7. 1667.

Prov. 4. 23.

Keep thy Heart with all diligence, for out of it are the iſſues of Life.

THe *Heart* of Man is his worſt part before it be Regenerate, and the beſt afterwards: It is the ſeat of Principles, and fountain of Actions. The eye of God is, and the eye of the Chriſtian ought to be principally fixed upon it.

The greateſt difficulty in Converſion is to win the heart to God, and the greateſt difficulty after Converſion is to keep the heart with God. Here lies the very pinch and ſtreſs of Religion; here's that that makes the way to life a narrow way, and the Gate of Heaven a ſtrait Gate. Direction and help in this great work, is the ſcope and ſum of this Text, wherein we have,

1. An Exhortation, *Keep thy heart with all diligence.*

2. The reaſon or Motive inforcing it, *For out of it are the iſſues of Life.*

In the Exhortation I ſhall conſider,

I. The Matter of the Duty.

II. The manner of performing it.

1. The Matter of the Duty; *Keep thy Heart.* Heart is not here taken properly for that noble part of the body which philoſophers call the *primum vivens, & ultimum moriens*; the firſt that lives, and the laſt that dies? but by Heart in a Metaphor, the Scripture ſomtimes underſtands ſome particular noble faculty of the Soul, in *Rom.* 1. 21. it is put for the underſtanding part, their fooliſh Heart, (*i. e.*) *their fooliſh underſtanding was darkned.* And *Pſal.* 119. 11. It is put for the memory, *Thy word have I hid in my Heart.* And 1 *John* 3. 10. It is put for the Conſcience, which hath in it both the light of the Underſtanding, and the recognitions of the memory: if our heart condemn us; (*i. e.*) if our Conſcience; whoſe proper office it is to condemn. But here we are to take it more generally for the whole Soul, or inner man; for look what the heart is to the body, that the Soul is to the Man: and what health is to the heart, that Holineſs is to the Soul: *Quod ſanitas in corpore, & ſanctitas in corde.* The ſtate of the whole body depends upon the ſoundneſs and vigour of the heart, and the everlaſting ſtate of the whole

whole man upon the good or ill condition of the Soul.

And by keeping the Heart, underſtand the *diligent* and *conſtant* uſe and improvement of all holy Means and Duties, to preſerve the ſoul from ſin, and maintain its ſweet and free communion with God. * *Lavatur* in *loc.* will have the word taken from a beſieged Garriſon begirt by many enemies without, and in danger of being betrayed by the trecherous Citizens within, in which danger the Souldiers upon pain of death are commanded to watch; and whereas the expreſſion, *(Keep thy heart)* ſeems to put it upon us as our work, yet it doth not imply a ſufficiency or ability in us to do it; we are as able to ſtop the Sun in its courſe, or make the Rivers run backwards, as by our own skill and power to rule and order our hearts: we may as well be our own *Saviours*, as our own *Keepers*, and yet *Solomon* ſpeaks properly

* I ſay conſtant, for the reaſon added in the Text, extends the duty to all the ſtates and conditions of a Chriſtians life, and makes it bind *ad ſemper*: If the heart muſt be kept becauſe out of it were the iſſues of life, then as long as theſe iſſues of life do flow out of it, we are obliged to keep it.

perly enough, when he ſaith, *Keep thy Heart*, becauſe the Duty is ours, though the power be Gods. A natural Man hath no power, a gracious man hath ſome though not ſufficient, and that power he hath, depends upon the exciting and aſſiſting ſtrength of Chriſt; *Gracia graciam poſtulat*, Grace within us is beholding to Grace without us, *John* 15. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* So much of the matter of the Duty.

2. The manner of performing it, is *with all diligence*, the *Hebrew* is very Emphatical מכל משמר *cum omni cuſtodia*, Keep with all keeping, *q. d.* keep, keep; ſet double guards, your hearts will be gone elſe: And this vehemency of expreſſion with which the Duty is urged, plainly implies how difficult it is to keep our hearts, and how dangerous to let them go.

3. The Reaſon or Motive quickning to this Duty is very forcible and weighty, *For out of it are the iſſues of life.* That is, it is the Sourſe and Fountain of all vital actions and operations? *Hinc fons boni & peccandi origo*, ſaith *Jerom*; it is the Spring and Original both of good and evil, as the ſpring in a watch that ſets all the wheels in motion. The Heart is the Treaſury, the Hand and Tongue but the

the Shops, what is in these came from thence; the hand and tongue always begin where the heart ends. The Heart contrives, and the Members execute, *Luke 6, 46. A good man out of the good treasury of his heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasury of his heart bringeth forth evil things; for out of the abundance of his heart his mouth speaketh.* So then, if the heart erre in its work, these must needs miscarry in theirs; for Heart-errours are like the errours of the first concoction, which cannot be rectifyed afterwards: Or like the mis-placing and inverting of the stamps and letters in the Press, which must needs cause so many Errata's in all the Copies that are printed off. Oh then! how important a Duty is that which is contained in the following Proposition?

Doct. *That the keeping and right manzging of the heart in every condition, is the great busines of a Christians life.*

What the *Philosopher* saith of Waters, is as properly applicable to hearts, *suis terminis difficile continentur*; 'tis hard to keep them within any bounds: God hath set bounds and limits to them, yet how frequently do they transgress, not only the bounds of Grace and Religion, but

even of Reaſon and common Honeſty: *Hic labor hoc opus eſt*, this is that which affords the Chriſtian matter of labour, fear and trembling to his dying day. 'Tis not the cleanſing of the hand that makes a Chriſtian, for many a Hypocrite can ſhew as fair a hand as he, but the purifying, watching, and right ordering of the heart, this is the thing that provokes ſo many ſad complaints, and coſts ſo many deep groans and briniſh tears. 'Twas the pride of *Hezekiah*'s heart that made him lie in the duſt mourning before the Lord, 2 *Chron.* 32. 26. 'Twas the fear of Hypocriſie invading the heart, that made *David* cry, *let my heart be ſound in thy Statutes, that I be not aſhamed, Pſal.* 119. 80. 'Twas the ſad experience he had of the Diviſions and Diſtractions of his own Heart in the ſervice of God, that made him pour out that prayer, *Pſal.* 86. 11. *Unite my Heart to fear thy Name.*

The method in which I ſhall improve the Point, ſhall be this.

1. Firſt, I ſhall inquire what the keeping of the heart ſuppoſes and imports.

2. Secondly, Aſſign divers Reaſons, why Chriſtians muſt make this the great work and buſineſs of their lives.

3. Thirdly, Point at thoſe ſpecial ſea-

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ſons which eſpecially call for this diligence in keeping the heart.

4. Fourthly and laſtly, apply the whole in ſeveral uſes.

1. What the keeping of the heart ſuppoſes and imports.

To keep the heart neceſſarily ſuppoſes a previous work of Sanctification; which hath ſet the Heart right by giving it a new ſpiritual bent and inclination; for as long as the Heart is *not ſet right* by Grace, as to its habitual frame, no Duties or Means can *keep it right* with God. Self is the Poiſe of the unſanctified Heart, which byaſſes and moves it in all its deſigns and actions; and as long as it is ſo, it is impoſſible that any external means ſhould keep it with God.

Man by Creation was of one conſtant uniform frame and tenour of ſpirit, held one ſtreight and even courſe; not one thought or faculty ravell'd or diſorder'd, his mind had a perfect illumination to underſtand and know the will of God, his will a perfect compliance therewith; his ſenſitive appetite and other inferiour powers, ſtood in a moſt obedient ſubordination.

Man by degeneration is become a moſt diſordered and rebellious Creature,

conteſting with, and oppoſing his maker, as the *firſt cauſe*, by ſelf-dependance; as the *chiefeſt good*, by ſelf-love; as the *Higheſt Lord*, by ſelf-will; and as the *laſt end*, by ſelf-ſeeking: and ſo is quite diſordered, and all his acts irregular: His illuminated underſtanding is clouded with ignorance, his complying will, full of Rebellion and Stubborneſs; his ſubordinate powers, caſting off the dominion and government of the ſuperior faculties.

But by Regeneration, this diſordered Soul is ſet right again; Sanctification being the rectifying, and due framing, or as the Scripture phraſes it, the renovation of the Soul after the Image of God, *Eph.* 4. 24. in which, *ſelf-dependance* is removed by Faith; *ſelf-love* by the love of God; *ſelf-will*, by ſubjection and obedience to the will of God: and *ſelf-ſeeking*, by ſelf-denial. The darkned underſtanding is again illuminated, *Epheſ.* 1. 18. the refractory will ſweetly ſubdu'd, *Pſal.* 110. 3. the rebellious appetite, or concupiſcence, gradually conquer'd, *Rom.* 6. 7. *per tot.* And thus the Soul which ſin had univerſally depraved, is again by Grace reſtored and rectified.

This being preſuppoſed, it will not be difficult to apprehend, what it is to keep the

the Heart which is nothing elſe but the *conſtant care and diligence of ſuch a renewed man, to preſerve his Soul in that holy Frame to which Grace hath reduced it, and daily ſtrives to hold it.*

For though Grace hath in great meaſure rectified the Soul, and given it an habitual and heavenly temper; yet ſin often actually diſcompoſes it again, ſo that even a gratious heart is like a Muſical inſtrument, which though it be never ſo exactly tuned, a ſmall matter brings it out of tune again; yea, hang it aſide but a little, and it will need ſetting again, before you can play another Leſſon on it: even ſo ſtands the caſe with gratious hearts; if they are in frame in one duty, yet how dull, dead and diſordered when they come to another: and therefore every duty needs a particular preparation of the heart, *Job* 11. 13. *If thou prepare thine heart, and ſtretch out thy hands towards him*: Well then, to keep the Heart, is carefully to preſerve it from ſin which diſorders it, and maintain that ſpiritual and gratious frame which fits it for a life of communion with God: and this includes theſe ſix acts in it.

1. Firſt, frequent obſervation of the frame of the Heart, turning in and examining

mining how the caſe ſtands with it, this is one part of the work. Carnal and formal perſons take no heed to this, they cannot be brought to confer with their own hearts, there are ſome men and women that have lived forty or fifty years in the world, and have ſcarce had one hours diſcourſe with their own hearts all that while: 'tis an hard thing to bring a man and himſelf together upon ſuch an account; but Saints know thoſe Soliloquies and ſelf-conferences to be of excellent uſe and advantage. The Heathen could ſay, *anima ſedendo & quieſcendo fit ſapiens*, the Soul is made wiſe by ſitting ſtill in quietneſs; though Bankrupts care not to look into their Books of accompt; yet upright hearts will know whether they go backward or forward, *Pſal. 77. 6. I commune with mine own heart.* The heart can never be kept, untill its caſe be examined and underſtood.

2. It includes deep Humiliations for Heart-evils and diſorders, thus *Hezekiah* humbled himſelf for the pride of his Heart, 2 *Chron.* 32. 26. Thus the people were ordered to ſpread forth their hands to God in prayer, in a ſence of the Plague of their own Hearts, 1 *Kings* 8. 38. Upon this account many an upright

heart

heart hath been laid low before God: O what an heart have I? they have in their confeſſions pointed at the heart, the pained place; Lord here is the wound, here is the Plague-ſore; it is with the Heart well kept, as it is with the eye, which is a fit emblem of it; if a ſmall duſt get into the eye, it will never leave twinkling and watering till it have wept it out: So the upright heart cannot be at reſt till it have wept out its troubles, and poured out its complaints before the Lord.

3. It includes earneſt Supplications, and inſtant Prayer for heart-purifying and rectifying Grace, when ſin hath defiled and diſordered it, ſo *Pſal.* 119. 12. *Cleanſe thou me from ſecret faults*, and *Pſal.* 86. 11. *Unite my heart to fear thy Name.* Saints have always many ſuch Petitions depending before the Throne of Grace; this is the thing which is moſt pleaded by them with God: when they are praying for outward mercies, haply their Spirits may be more remiſs, but when it comes to the heart-caſe, then they intend their Spirits to the utmoſt, fill their mouths with Arguments, weep and make ſupplications; Oh, for a better heart! Oh for a heart to love God more! To hate ſin more, to walk more evenly

evenly with God; Lord deny not to me such a Heart whatever thou deny me; Give me an Heart to fear thee, love, and delight in thee, if I beg my bread in desolate places. 'Tis observed of holy Mr. *Bradford*, that when he was confessing sin, he would never give over confessing until he had felt some brokenness of Heart for that sin, and when praying for any spiritual Mercy, would never give over that suit, till he had got some relish of that Mercy; that's the third thing included in keeping the heart.

4. It includes the imposing of strong ingagements and Bonds upon our selves to walk more acurately with God, and avoid the occasions whereby the Heart may be induced to sin: Well composed, advised, and deliberate Vows are in some cases of excellent use to guard the Heart against some special sin. So *Job* 31. 1. *I made a covenant with my eyes*; by this means holy ones have over-awed their souls, and preserved themselves from defilement by some special Heart-corruptions.

5. It includes a constant holy jealousie over our own Hearts; quick-sighted self-jealousie is an excellent preservative from sin. He that will keep his Heart, must have

have the eyes of his Soul awake and open upon all the diſorderly, and tumultuous ſtirrings of his affections: if the affections break looſe, and the paſſions be ſtirred, the Soul muſt diſcover and ſuppreſs them before they get to an height: O my ſoul Doſt thou well in this? My tumultuous thoughts and paſſions, where is your Commiſſion? *State viri, quæ cauſa viæ? quive eſtis in armis. Virg.*

Happy is the man that thus feareth alwayes. *Prov.* 28. 14. By this fear of the Lord it is that men depart from evil, ſhake off ſecurity, and preſerve themſelves from iniquity, he that will keep his heart muſt feed with fear, rejoyce with fear, and paſs the whole time of his ſojourning here in fear, and all little enough to keep the heart from ſin.

6. And laſtly; To add no more, it includes the reallizing of Gods preſence with us, and getting the Lord alwayes before us: this the people of God have found a ſingular means to keep their hearts upright, and aw them from ſin: when the eye of our Faith is fixed upon the eye of Gods Omniſcience, we dare not let out our thoughts and affections to vanity: Holy *Job* durſt not ſuffer his heart to yield to an impure, vain thought,

and

and what was it that moved him to ſo great a Circumſpection? Why he tells you, *Job* 31. 1. *Doth he not ſee my ways, and count all my ſteps? Walk before me* (ſaith God to *Abraham*) *and be thou perfect*, *Gen.* 17. 1. Even as parents uſe to ſet their Children in the Congregation before them, knowing that elſe they will be toying and playing; ſo would the Heart of the beſt man too, were it not for the eye of God.

In theſe and ſuch like particulars, do gracious ſouls expreſs the care they have of their hearts; they are as careful to prevent the breaking looſe of their corruptions in times of temptation, as Seamen are to bind faſt their Guns, that they break not looſe in a ſtorm; as careful to preſerve the ſweetneſs and comfort they have got from God in any duty, as one that comes out of an hot bath, or great ſweat, is of taking cold, by going forth into the chill air: this is the work, and of all works in Religion it is the moſt difficult, conſtant and important work.

1. 'Tis the hardeſt work; heart work is hard work indeed: to ſhuffle over Religious duties with a looſe and heedleſs Spirit, will coſt no great pains, but to ſet thy ſelf before the Lord, and tye up thy looſe

looſe and vain thoughts to a conſtant and ſerious attendance upon him, this will coſt thee ſomething: to attain a facility and dexterity of language in Prayer, and put thy meaning into apt and decent expreſſions is eaſie, but to get thy heart broken for ſin while thou art confeſſing it; melted with free grace whilſt thou art bleſſing God for it, to be really aſhamed and humbled through the apprehenſions of Gods infinite Holineſs, and to keep thy Heart in this frame, not only in, but after Duty; will ſurely coſt thee ſome groans, and travelling pains of Soul: to repreſs the outward acts of ſin, and compoſe the external part of thy life in a laudable and comely manner is no great matter, even carnal perſons by the force of common Principles can do this; but to kill the root of corruption within, to ſet and keep up a holy Government over thy thoughts, to have all things lye ſtreight and orderly in the heart, this is not eaſie.

2. 'Tis a conſtant work; the keeping of the Heart is ſuch a work, as is never done till life be done; this labour and our life end together: It is with a Chriſtian in this buſineſs as it is with Seamen, that have ſprung a Leak at Sea, if they

tug

ug not constantly at the pump, the wa-er encreases upon them, and will quickly sink them: 'tis in vain for them to say the work is hard, and we are weary: There is no time or condition in the life of a Christian, which will suffer an intermission of this work: It is in the keeping watch over our hearts, as it was in the keeping up of *Moses* his hands, whilst *Israel* and *Amaleck* were fighting below, *Exod.* 17. 12. No sooner do *Moses* his hands grow weary and sink down, but *Amaleck* prevails: You know it cost *David* and *Peter* many a sad day and night for intermitting the watch over their own hearts but a few minutes.

3. 'Tis the most important business of a Christians life; without this we are but Formalists in Religion: all our professions, Gifts and Duties signifie nothing: *My Son give me thine heart*, *Prov.* 23. 26. God is pleased to call that a gift, which is indeed a debt: he will put this honour upon the creature to receive it from him in the way of a gift; but if this be not given him, he regards not what ever else you bring to him: there is so much only of worth and value in what we do, as there is of heart in it: Concerning the heart, God seems to say as

Joseph

Joseph of *Benjamin*, *if you bring not* Benjamin *with you, you shall not see my face.* Among the Heathens when the Beast was cut up for Sacrifice, the first thing the *Priest* lookt upon was the Heart, and if that were unsound and naught, the Sacrifice was rejected. God rejects all duties (how glorious soever in other respects) offered him without a heart: he that performs duty without a Heart, *viz.* needlesly, is no more accepted with God, than he that performs it with a double heart, *viz.* Hypocritically, *Isa.* 66. 3. And thus I have briefly opened the nature of the Duty, what is imported in this phrase, *Keep thy heart.*

2. Next, I shall give you some rational account why Christians should make this the great business of their lives, to keep their hearts?

The importance and necessity of making this our great and main business, will manifestly appear in that, 1. The honour of God. 2. The Sincerity of our Profession. 3. The beauty of our conversation. 4. The comfort of our souls. 5. The improvement of our Graces: And 6. Our stability in the hour of temptation, are all wrapt up in, and dependent on our sincerity and care

in the management of his Work.

1. The Glory of God is much concerned therein; heart-evils are very provoking evils to the Lord. The Schools do well observe, that outward sins are *majoris infamiæ*, sins of greater infamy; but heart-sins are *majoris reatus*, sins of deeper guilt. How severely hath the Great God declared his Wrath from Heaven against Heart-wickedness? The great Crime for which the old World stands indicted, *Gen.* 6. 5, 6, 7. is heart-wickedness; *God saw that every imagination* (or fiction) *of their heart was only evil, and that continually*: for which he sent the dreadfullest Judgment that was ever executed since the World began: *And the Lord said, I will destroy Man whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both Man and Beast, and the creeping things, and the fowls of Heaven, for it repenteth me that I have made Man*, v. 7. We find not their Murders, Adulteries, Blasphemies, (though they were defiled with these) particularly alledged against them; but the evils of their hearts: yea, that which God was so provoked by, as to give up his peculiar inheritance into the enemies hand, was the evil of their hearts, *Jer.* 4. 14. *O Jerusalem wash thine heart, from*

from wickedneſs that thou maiſt be ſaved, how long ſhall vain thoughts lodge within thee: The wickedneſs and vanity of their thoughts God took ſpecial notice of; and becauſe of this the *Caldean* muſt come upon them as a *Lion from his thickets*, v. 7. *and tear them to pieces.* For the very ſin of thoughts it was that God threw down the faln Angels from Heaven, and keeps them ſtill in everlaſting chains to the judgment of the great day; by which expreſſion is not obſcurely intimated ſome extraordinary Judgment to which they are reſerved, as Priſoners that have moſt irons laid upon them, may be ſuppoſed to be the greateſt Malefactors: and what was their ſin? Why, only ſpiritual wickedneſs, for they having no bodily Organs, could act nothing externally againſt God. Yea, meer heart-evils are ſo provoking, that for them he rejects with indignation all the duties that ſome men perform unto him, *Iſa. 66. 3. He that killeth an Ox, is as if he ſlew a Man, he that Sacrificeth a Lamb, as if he cut off a dogs neck, he that offereth an Oblation, as if he offered Swines Blood, he that burneth incenſe, as if he bleſſed an Idol.* In what words could the abhorrence of a Creatures actions be

more fully expressed by the holy God; Murther and Idolatry are not more vile in his account than their Sacrifices, though materially such as himself appointed: and what made them so? the following words inform us, *Their Soul delighteth in their abominations?*

To conclude, such is the vileness of meer heart-sins, that the Scriptures sometimes intimate the difficuty of pardon for them. So in the case of *Simon Magus*, *Act.* 8. 21. his heart was not right, he had vile thoughts of God, and the things of God, the Apostle bids him *repent and pray, if perhaps the thoughts of his heart might be forgiven him.* Oh then never slight heart-evils! for by these God is highly wronged and provoked, and for this reason let every Christian make it his work to keep his heart with all diligence.

2. The Sincerity of our Profession depends much upon the care and Conscience we have in keeping our hearts; for it's most certain that a man is but an hypocrite in his Profession, how curious soever he be in the externals of Religion, that is heedless and careless of the frame of his heart, you have a pregnant instance of this in the case of *Jehu*, 2 *Kings* 10.

10. 31. *But* Jehu *took no heed to walk in the ways of the Lord God of Israel with his heart.* That Context gives us an account of the great ſervice perform'd by *Jehu* againſt the houſe of *Ahab* and *Baal*, as alſo of a great temporal reward given him by God for that Service, even that his Children to the fourth Generation ſhould ſit upon the Throne of *Iſrael*. And yet in theſe words *Jehu* is cenſured for an hypocrite; though God approved and rewarded the work, yet he abhorred and rejected the perſon that did it as hypocritical: and wherein lay his hypocriſie? but in this, that he took no heed to walk in the ways of the Lord with his heart, (*i. e.*) he did all inſincerely, and for ſelf-ends; and though the work he did were materially good, yet he not purging his heart from thoſe unworthy ſelf-deſigns in doing it, was an hypocrite: And *Simon* of whom we ſpake before: though he appeared ſuch a peſon that the Apoſtle could not regularly refuſe him, yet his hypocriſie was quickly diſcovered: and, what diſcovered it? but this, that though he profeſſed and aſſociated himſelf with the Saints, yet he was a ſtranger to the mortification of heart-ſins: *Thy heart is not right with*

God, *Acts* 8. 21— 'Tis true, there is a great difference among Christians themselves in their diligence and dexterity about heart-work; some are more conversant and successful in it than others are, but he that takes no heed to his heart, he that is not careful to order it aright before God, is but a Hypocrite, *Ezek.* 33. 31, 32. *And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and sit before thee* [*as my people*] *and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goes after their covetousness.* Here were a company of formal Hypocrites, as is evident by that expression [*as my people*] like them but not of them: and what made them so? their outside was fair, here were reverent postures, high professions, much seeming joy and delight in Ordinances, *Thou art to them as a lovely Song*; yea, but for all that, they kept not their hearts with God in those duties, their hearts were commanded by their lusts, they went after their covetousness; had they kept their hearts with God, all had been well, but not regarding which way their heart went in duty; there lay the coar of their hypocrisie.

Object. If any upright Soul should hence

hence infer, then I am an hypocrite too, for many times my heart departs from God in duty, do what I can, yet I cannot hold it close with God.

Sol. To this I answer, the very Objection carries in it its own Solution: Thou sayest do what I can, yet I cannot keep my heart with God. Soul, if thou dost what thou canst thou hast the blessing of an upright, though God sees good to exercise thee under the affliction of a discomposed heart. There remains still some wildness in the thoughts and fancies of the best to humble them; but if you find a care before to prevent them, and opposition against them when they come, grief and sorrow afterwards; you will find enough to clear you from raigning Hypocrisie. (1.) This fore-care is seen partly in laying up the word in thine heart to prevent them, *Ps.* 119. 11. *Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee*: partly in our endeavours to engage our hearts to God, *Jer.* 30. 21. and partly in begging preventing grace from God in our on sets upon duty, *Psal.* 119. 36, 37. 'tis a good sign where this care goes before a duty. And (2.) 'tis a sweet sign of uprightness to oppose them in their first rise,

Pſal. 119. 113. *I hate vain thoughts*, Gal. 5. 17. *The ſpirit luſteth againſt the fleſh.* And (3.) Thy after-grief diſcovers thy upright heart; if with *Hezekiah* thou art humbled for the evils of thy heart, thou haſt no reaſon from theſe diſorders to queſtion the integrity of it; but to ſuffer ſin to lodge quietly in the heart, to let thy heart habitually and uncontrolledly wander from God, is a ſad and dangerous ſymptom indeed.

3. The beauty of our Converſation ariſes from the heavenly frames, and holy order of our ſpirits; there is a ſpiritual luſtre and beauty in the Converſation of Saints, *The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour*, they ſhine as the lights of the World; but whatever luſtre and beauty is in their lives, comes from the excellency of their Spirits; as the Candle within puts a luſtre upon the Lanthorn in which it ſhines. It is impoſſible that a diſordered and neglected heart ſhould ever produce a well-ordered converſation; and ſince (as the Text obſerves) the iſſues or ſtreams of life flow out of the heart as their fountain, it muſt needs follow, that ſuch as the heart is, the life will be: hence, 1 *Pet.* 2. 11, 12. *Abſtain from fleſhly luſts* ——*having your con-*

conversation honest, * or beautiful as the Greek word imports. So *Isa.* 55. 7. *Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts.* His way notes the course of his life, his thoughts the frame of his heart; and therefore since the way and course of his life flows from his thoughts, or the frame of his heart, both or neither will be forsaken: the heart is the womb of all actions, these actions are virtually and seminally contained in our thoughts, these thoughts being once made up into affections, are quickly made out into suitable actions and practices. If the heart be wicked, then as *Christ* saith, *Matthew* 15. 19. *Out of the heart proceed evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries*, &c. Mark the order, first, wanton or revengeful thoughts, then unclean or Murderous practices.

* Rom.

And if the heart be holy or spiritual, then as *David* speaks from sweet experience, in *Psal.* 45. 1 *My heart is* [*inditing*] *a good matter, I speak of the things which* [*I have made*] *my tongue is as the pen of a ready writer.* Here's a life richly beautified with good works; some ready made; *I will speak of the things which I have made*: others upon the wheel making

king, *My heart is enditing*, but both proceeding from the heavenly frame of his heart.

Put but the heart in frame, and the life will quickly discover that it is so. I think it is not very difficult to discern by the duties and converses of Christians, what frames their spirits are under; take a Christian in a good frame, and how serious, heavenly, and profitable will his converses and duties be! what a lovely companion is he, during the continuance of it! 'twould do any ones heart good to be with him at such a time, *Psal.* 37. 30, 31. *The mouth of the righteous speaketh Wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment, the Law of his God is in his heart.*

When the heart is up with God, and full of God, how dexterously and ingenuously will he wind in spiritual discourse, improving every occasion and advantage to some heavenly purpose, few words run then at the waste spout.

And what else can be the reason, why the discourses and duties of many Christians are become so frothy and unprofitable, their communion both with God, and one another become as a dry stake, but because their hearts are neglected

lected. Surely this muſt be the reaſon of it, and verily it is an evil greatly to be bewailed, for as by this, Chriſtian fellowſhip is become a ſapleſs thing, ſo the attracting beauty that was wont to ſhine from the Converſations of the Saints upon the Faces and Conſciences of the World, (which if it did not allure and bring them in love with the waies of God; yet at leaſt left a teſtimony in their Conſciences of the excellency of thoſe men and their way) this is in a great meaſure loſt, to the unſpeakable detriment of Religion.

Time was, when Chriſtians did carry it at ſuch a rate, that the World ſtood at a gaze at them, as that word, 1 *Pet.* 4. 4. imports, their life ξενίζονται and language was of a different ſtrain from others, their tongues diſcovered them to be *Galileans* where ever they came; but now ſince vain ſpeculations, and fruitleſs controverſies have ſo much obtained, and heart-work, practical godlineſs, ſo much neglected among Profeſſors, the caſe is ſadly altered, their diſcourſe is become like other Mens: if they come among you now, they may (to allude to that, *Acts* 2. 6. *Hear every Man ſpeak in his own language.* And truly

truly I have little hope to see this evil redressed, and the credit of Religion again repaired; till Christians fall again to their old work, till they ply heart-work closer: when the salt of heavenly mindedness is again cast into the Spring, the *streams* will run clearer and sweeter.

4. The comfort of our souls doth much depend upon the keeping of our hearts, for he that is negligent in attending his own heart, is (ordinarily) a great stranger to assurance, and the sweet comforts flowing from it.

Indeed, if the *Antinomian* Doctrine were true, which teaches you to reject all marks and signs for the tryal of your conditions, telling you it is only the Spirit that immediately assures you by witnessing your adoption directly without them, then you might be careless of your hearts, yea, strangers to them, and yet no strangers to comfort: but since both Scripture and experience do confute this dotage, I hope you will never look for comfort in that unscriptural way. I deny not but it is the work and office of the Spirit to assure you, and yet do confidently affirm, that if ever you attain assurance in the ordinary way wherein God dispenses it, you must take pains with

with your own hearts, you may expect your comforts upon easier terms; but I am mistaken, if ever you enjoy them upon any other: *Give all diligence*; *prove your selves*: this is the Scripture way. I remember Mr. *Roberts* in his Treatise of the Covenant, tell us, that he knew a Christian who in the infancy of his Christianity, so vehemently panted after the infallible assurance of Gods love, that for a long time together he earnestly desired some voice from Heaven; yea, sometimes walking in the solitary fields; earnestly desired some Miraculous Voice from the Trees and Stones there; this, after many desires and longings was denied him: but in time a better was afforded in the ordinary way of searching the Word and his own heart. An instance of the like nature the Learned *Gerson* gives us, of one that was driven by temptation upon the very borders of desperation, at last being sweetly setled and assured, one asked him, how he attained it? he answered, *Non ex nova aliqua revelatione*, &c. Not by any extraordinary revelation, but by subjecting his understanding to the Scriptures, and comparing his own heart with them. The Spirit indeed assures by witnessing

nessing our adoption, and he witnesseth two ways. (1.) Objectively; (*i.e.*) by working those Graces in our Souls which are the conditions of the Promise, and so the Spirit and his Graces in us are all one; the spirit of God dwelling in us, is a mark of our adoption. Now the Spirit cannot be discerned in his essence, but in his operations; and to discern these is to discern the spirit; and how these should be discerned without serious searching and diligent watching of the heart, I cannot imagine. (2) The other way of the Spirits witnessing is effectively, (*i.e.*) by irradiating the Soul with a Grace discovering light, shining upon his own work; and this in order of nature follows the former work: he first infuses the Grace, and then opens the eye of the Soul to see it. Now since the heart is the subject of that infused Grace, even this way of the Spirits witnessing also includes the necessity of keeping carefully our own hearts: for (1) A neglected heart is so confused and dark that the little grace which is in it is not ordinarily discernable: the most accurate and laborious Christians, that take most pains, and spend most time about their hearts, do yet find it very dif-

difficult to diſcover the pure and genuine workings of the Spirit there, how then ſhall the Chriſtian, which is (comparatively) negligent and remiſs about heart work, be ever able to diſcover it? Sincerity which is the *quæſitum*, the thing ſought for, lies in the heart like a ſmall piece of gold in the bottom of a River, he that will find it muſt ſtay till the water be clear and ſetled, and then he ſhall ſee it ſparkling at the bottom; and that the heart may be clear and ſetled, how much pains and watching, care and diligence will it coſt?

2. God doth not uſually indulge lazy and negligent ſouls with the comforts of Aſſurance, he will not ſo much as ſeem to patronize ſloath and careleſsneſs, he will give it, but it ſhall be in his own way: his command hath united our care and comfort together: they are miſtaken that think the beautiful Child of Aſſurance may be born without pangs: Ah, how many ſolitary hours have the people of God ſpent in heart-examination? How many times have they looked into the World, and then into their hearts? Sometimes they thought they diſcovered ſincerity, and

were

w ereeven ready to draw forth the triumphant concluſion of Aſſurance, then comes a doubt they cannot reſolve, and daſhes all again; many hopes and fears, doubtings and reaſonings they have had in their own breaſts, before they arrived at a comfortable ſettlement.

To conclude, Suppoſe it poſſible for a careleſs Chriſtian to attain Aſſurance, yet 'tis impoſſible he ſhould long retain it; for it is with thoſe whoſe hearts are big with the joys of Aſſurance, as with a pregnant Woman ſubject to miſcarriages; if extraordinary care be not uſed, it is a thouſand to one if ever ſhe imbrace a living Child: So 'tis here, a little pride, vanity, careleſsneſs, daſhes all that for which thou haſt been labouring a long time in many a weary duty. Since then the joy of our life, the comfort of our ſouls, riſes and falls without diligence in this work; keep your hearts with all diligence.

5. The improvement of our Graces depends on the keeping of our hearts; I never knew Grace thrive in a negligent and careleſs Soul; the habits and roots of grace are planted in the heart; and the deeper they are radicated there, the more thriving and flouriſhing Grace is: in *Eph.* 3. 17.

3, 17. we read of *being rooted in Grace*: Grace in the heart is the root of every gracious word in the mouth, and of every holy work in the hand, *Pſal.* 116. 10. 2 *Cor.* 4. 13. 'tis true, Chriſt is the root of a Chriſtian; but Chriſt is *Origo originans*, the originating root and grace, *Origo originata*, a root originated, planted, and influenced by Chriſt, according as this thrives under divine influences, ſo the acts of grace are more or leſs fruitful and vigorous: Now in a heart not kept with care and diligence, theſe fructifying influences are ſtopt and cut off, multitudes of vanities break in upon it, and devour its ſtrength; the heart is as it were the paſture in which multitudes of thoughts are fed every day; a gracious heart diligently kept, feeds many precious thoughts of God in a day, *Pſal.* 139. 17. *How precious are thy thoughts to me O God! How great is the ſum of them! if I ſhould count them, they are more in number than the ſand; and when I awake, I am ſtill with thee.* And as the gracious heart feeds and nouriſhes them, ſo they refreſh and feaſt the heart. *Pſal.* 63. 5, 6. *My ſoul is filled as with Marrow and fatneſs whilſt I think upon thee*, &c. But in the diſ-regarded heart, ſwarms of vain and fooliſh

thoughts are perpetuall working, and juſtle out thoſe ſpiritualy Idea's and thoughts of God, by which the Soul ſhould be refreſhed.

Beſides, the careleſs heart makes nothing out of any Duty or Ordinance it performs or attends on, and yet theſe are the Conduits of Heaven from whence Grace is watred and made fruitfull; a man may go with an heedleſs ſpirit from Ordinance to Ordinance, abide all his days under the choiceſt teachings, and yet never be improved by them; for heart neglect is a leak in the bottom, no heavenly influences, how rich ſoever, abide in that Soul, *Matth.* 13. 3, 4. The heart that lies open and common like the High-way, free for all paſſengers; when the ſeed fell on it, the Fowls came and devoured it. Alaſs! it is not enough to hear, unleſs we take heed how we hear: a man may pray, and never the better, unleſs we watch unto Prayer. In a word, all Ordinances, Means and Duties are bleſſed unto the improvement of Grace, according to the care and ſtrictneſs we uſe in keeping our hearts in them.

6. Laſtly, the ſtability of our ſouls in the hour of temptation, will be much according

according to the care and Conscience we have of keeping our hearts; the careless heart is an easie prey to Satan, in the hour of temptation, his main Batteries are raised against that Fort-royal, the Heart: if he win that, he wins all, for it commands the whole Man: and alass, how easie a Conquest is a neglected heart: 'tis no more difficult to surprize it, than for an enemy to enter that City, whose Gates are open and unguarded: 'tis the watchful heart that discovers and suppresses the temptation before it come to its strength. Divines observe this to be the method in which temptations are ripened and brought to their full strength: there is first the irritation of the *Object*, or that power it hath to work upon and provoke our corrupt nature, which is either done by the real presence of the object, or else by Speculation, when the object (though absent) is held out by the phantasy before the Soul. (2) Then follows the motion of the sensitive appetite, which is stirred and provoked by the phantasy, representing it as a sensual good, as having profit or pleasure in it. (3) Then there is a consultation in the mind about

bout it, deliberating about the likeliest means of accomplishing it. (4) Next follows the Election or choice of the Will. (5) And lastly, The desire of full engagement of the Will to it; all this may be done in a few moments, for the debates of the Soul are quick, and soon ended: when it comes thus far, then the heart is won, Satan hath entred victoriously, and displayed his Colours upon the Walls of that Royal Fort; but had the heart been well guarded at first, it had never come to this height; the temptation had been stopt in the first or second act; and indeed there it's stopt easily, for it is in the motions of a tempted Soul to Sin, as in the motion of a stone falling from the brow of an Hill, its easily stopt at first, but when once its set a going *Vires acquirit eundo*: and therefore its the greatest Wisdom in the World to observe the first motions of the Heart, to check and stop him there: the motions of sin are weakest at first, a little care and watchfulness may prevent much mischief now, which the careless heart not heeding, is brought within the power of temptation; as the *Syrians* were

brought

brought blindfold into the midst of Samaria, before they knew where they were.

By this time Reader, I hope thou art fully satisfied how consequential and necessary a work the keeping of thy heart is; it being a duty that wraps up so many dear interests of the Soul in it.

3. Next, According to the method propounded, I proceed to point out those special Seasons in the life of a Christian, which require and call for our utmost diligence in keeping the heart: for though (as was observed before) the Duty bind, *ad semper*, and there be no time or condition of life in which we may be excused from this work; yet there are some signal seasons, Critical hours, requiring more than a common vigilance over the heart.

And the first,

1. *Season.* "Is the time of Prosperity, when Providence smiles "upon us, and dandles upon us her "knee. Now Christian, keep thy "heart with all diligence; for now "'twill be exceeding apt to grow secure, "proud and earthly, *Rara virtus est humilitas honorata* (saith *Bernard*) to see "a man humble under prosperity, is one

"of the greatest rarities in the World. "Even a good *Hezekiah* could not hide "a vain-glorious temper under this temptation, and hence that Caution to *Israel*, "Deut. 6. 10, 11, 12. *And it shall be "when the Lord thy God shall have brought "thee into the Land which he sware to thy "Fathers, to* Abraham, Isaac, *and* Jacob, "*to give thee great and goodly Cities which "thou buildest not, and houses full of all "good things which thou filledst not*, &c. "*Then beware lest thou forget the Lord*, and "indeed so it fell out, *for Jerusalem waxed fat and kicked*, Deut. 32. 15.

Now then the first case will be this, *viz.*

Case. *How a Christian may keep his heart from Pride and carnal security under the smiles of providence, and confluence of Creature comforts?*

There are seven choice helps to secure the heart from the dangerous snares of prosperity, the first is this.

1. *To consider the dangerous insnaring temptations attending a pleasant and prosperous condition: few, yea very few of those that live in the pleasures and prosperity of this world, escape everlasting perdition*, Matth. 19. 24. *'tis easier* (saith Christ) *for a Camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*,

Heaven, 1 Cor. 1. 26. *not many mighty, not many noble are called.* It might juſtly make us tremble, when the Scripture tells us in general, that few ſhall be ſaved, much more when it tells us, that of that rank and ſort of which we are, but few ſhall be ſaved. When *Joſhua* called all the Tribes of *Iſrael* to lot upon them for the diſcovery of *Achan*, doubtleſs *Achan* feared; when the Tribe of *Judah* was taken, his fear encreaſed; but when the family of the *Zarhites* was taken, it was time then to tremble. So when the Scripture comes ſo near as to tell us that of ſuch a ſort of Men very few ſhall eſcape, 'tis time to look about: *miror ſi poteſt ſervari aliquis rectorum*, ſaith *Chriſoſtome*, I ſhould wonder if any of the Rulers be ſaved. O how many have been Coached to Hell in the Chariots of earthly pleaſure, whilſt others have been whipt to Heaven by the rod of affliction? How few, like the daughter of *Tyre*, come to Chriſt with a gift! How few among the rich intreat his favour.

2. *It may yet keep us more humble and watchful in proſperity, if we conſider that among Chriſtians many have been much the worſe for it*; how good had it been for ſome of them if they had never known

prosperity: when they were in a low condition, how humble, spiritual and heavenly were they; but when advanced, what an apparent alteration hath been upon their spirits; 'twas so with *Israel* when they were in a low condition in the Wilderness; then *Israel* was, *Holiness to the Lord*, *Jer.* 2. 23. but when they came into *Canaan*, and were fed in a fat Pasture, then, *We are Lords, we will come no more unto thee*, Vers. 31. outward gains are ordinarily attended with inward losses, as in a low condition; their civil imployments were wont to have a tang and savour of their duties, so in an exalted condition, their Duties commonly have a tang of the World. He indeed is rich in Grace, whose Graces are not hindred by his Riches, there are but few *Jehosaphats* in the World, of whom its said, 2 *Chron.* 17. 5, 6. *He had silver and gold in abundance, and his heart was lifted up in the way of Gods Commands.* Will not this keep thy heart humble in prosperity, to think how dear many godly men have paid for their riches, that through them they have lost that which all the World cannot purchase: Then in the next place,

3. Keep down thy vain heart by this Con-

Conſideration. *That God values no man a jot the more for theſe things.* God values no man by outward excellencies, but by inward Graces, they are the internal ornaments of the Spirit, which are of great price in Gods eyes, 1 *Pet.* 3. 4. he deſpiſes all worldly glory, and accepts no mans perſon, *but in every Nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted of him*, Acts. 10. 35. Indeed, if the Judgment of God went by the ſame rule that mans doth, we might value our ſelves by theſe things, and ſtand upon them: but as one ſaid (when dying) I ſhall not appear before God as a Doctor, but as a Man; *tantus quiſquis eſt, quantus eſt apud Deum.* So much every man is, and no more, as he is in the judgment of God. Doth thy heart yet ſwell? and will neither of the former conſiderations keep it humble.

4. Then fourthly, Conſider *how bitterly many perſons have bewailed their folly when they came to dye, that ever they ſet their hearts upon theſe things, and heartily wiſh that they had never known them.* What a ſad ſtory was that of *Pius Quintus*, who dying, cryed out deſpairingly, When I was in a low condition, I had ſome hopes of Salvation, but when I was advanced

to

to be a *Cardinal*, I greatly doubted it, but since I came to the Popedom, I have no hope at all. Mr. *Spencer* also tells us a real, but sad story of a rich oppressor, who had scraped up a great Estate for his only Son; When he came to die, he called his Son to him, and said, Son, do you indeed love me? the Son answered, that Nature, besides his paternal Indulgence, obliged him to that; then said the Father, express it by this, hold thy finger in the Candle as long as I am saying a *Pater-Noster*; the Son attempted, but could not endure it; upon that the Father brake out into these expressions, Thou canst not suffer the burning of thy finger for me, but to get this wealth, I have hazarded my Soul for thee, and must burn Body and Soul in Hell for thy sake, thy pains would have been but for a moment, but mine will be unquenchable fire.

5. The Heart may be kept humble by considering of what a clogging nature earthly things are to a Soul heartily engaged in the way to Heaven, they shut out much of heaven from us at present, though they may not shut us out of Heaven at last. If thou consider thy self under the notion of a stranger in this world, traveling

ing for Heaven, and seeking a better Countrey; thou hast then as much reason to be taken and delighted with these things, as a weary Horse hath with a heavy Cloak-bag: there was a serious truth in that Atheistical scoff of *Julian*, when he took away the Christians Estates and told them it was to make them fitter for the Kingdom of Heaven.

6. Is thy Spirit for all this flatulent and lofty, then urge upon it *the consideration of that awful day of reckoning, wherein according to our receipts of Mercies shall be our accounts for them*: And me thinks this should awe and humble the vaineſt heart that ever was in the Breast of a Saint. Know for certain, that the Lord records all the Mercies that ever he gave thee, from the beginning to the end of thy life, *Micah* 6. 5. *Remember O my people, from Shittim unto Gilgal*, &c. Yea, they are exactly numbred, and recorded, in order to an account; and thy account will be suitable, *Luke* 12. 48. *To whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required.* You are but Stewards, and your Lord will come to take an account of you; and what a great account have you to make who have much of this World in your hands; what swift wit-

witneſſes will your enemies be againſt you, if this be the beſt fruit of them?

7. It is a very humbling conſideration, *That the mercies of God ſhould work otherwiſe upon my ſpirit then they uſe to do upon the Spirits of others, to whom they come as ſanctified mercies from the love of God.* Ah Lord! What a ſad conſideration is this? enough to lay me in the duſt: When I conſider (1) That their mercies have greatly humbled them; the higher God hath raiſed them, the lower they have laid themſelves before God. Thus did *Jacob* when God had given him much ſubſtance, *Gen.* 32. 5, 10. *And* Jacob *ſaid, I am not worthy of the leaſt of all thy mercies, and all the truth which thou haſt ſhewed thy ſervant; for with my ſtaff I paſſed over this* Jordan, *and now am become two Bands.* And thus it was with holy *David*, 2 *Sam.* 7. 18. When God had confirmed the Promiſe to him, to build him an houſe, and not reject him as he did *Saul*, he goes in before the Lord, and ſaith, *Who am I, and what is my Fathers houſe, that thou haſt brought me hitherto?* and ſo indeed God required, *Deut.* 26. 5. when *Iſrael* was to bring to God the firſt-fruits of *Canaan*, they were to ſay, *A Syrian ready to periſh was my Father*

ther, &c. Do others raiſe God the higher for raiſing them? and the more God raiſes me, the more ſhall I abuſe him and exalt myſelf? O what a ſad thing is this! (2) Others have freely aſcribed the glory of all their enjoyments to God, and magnified not themſelves, but him, for their mercies: So *David*, 2 Sam. 26. 26. *Let thy name be magnified, and the houſe of thy ſervant be eſtabliſhed.* He doth not fly upon the mercy, and ſuck out the ſweetneſs of it, looking no farther than his own comfort; no, he cares for no mercy except God be magnified in it. So *Pſal.* 18. 2. when God had delivered him from all his enemies, *the Lord* (ſaith he) *is my ſtrength and my rock, he is become my Salvation.* They did not put the Crown upon their own heads as I do. (3) The mercies of God have been melting mercies unto others, melting their Souls in love to the God of their mercies. So *Hannah*, 1 *Sam.* 2. 1. when ſhe received the mercy of a Son, my Soul (ſaith ſhe) rejoyceth in the Lord, not in the mercy, but in the God of the mercy: And ſo *Mary*, *Luke* 1. 46. *My ſoul doth magnifie the Lord, my Spirit rejoyceth in God my Saviour*; the Word ſignifies, to make more room for God: Their hearts were

were not contracted, but the more inlarged to God: (4) the Mercies of God have been mighty restraints to keep others from sin. So *Ezra* 9. 13. *Seeing thou our God hast given us such a deliverance as this, should we again break thy Commandments?* ingenious Souls have felt the force of the obligations of Love, and Mercy upon them: (5) to conclude, the Mercies of God to others have been as Oyl to the wheel of their obedience, and make them fitter for service, 2 *Chron.* 17. 5. Now if Mercies work contrarily upon my heart, what cause have I to be afraid that they come not to me in love? I tell you this is enough to damp the Spirit of any Saint, to see what sweet effects they have had on others, and what sad effects on him.

2. *Season.* The second special Season "in the life of a Christian requiring "more than common diligence to keep "his heart, is *the time of adversity*; when "Providence frowns upon you, and "blasts your outward comforts, then "look to your hearts, keep them with "all diligence from repining against "God, or fainting under his hand: for "troubles; though sanctified, are trou-"bles still; even sweet-Bryar, and Ho-

ly

"ly-Thiſtle have their prickles. *Jonah* "was a good Man, and yet how pettiſh "was his heart under affliction? *Job* "was the mirrour of Patience, yet how "was his Heart diſcompoſed by trouble? "you will find it as hard to get a com-"poſed Spirit under great afflictions, as "it is to fix Quick-ſilver: Oh the hurries "and tumults which they occaſion even "in the beſt hearts! well then; the ſecond "Caſe will be this,

2 Caſe. *How a Chriſtian under great afflictions may keep his heart from repining or deſponding under the hand of God?* Now there are nine ſpecial helps I ſhall here offer, to keep thy heart in this condition; and the firſt ſhall be this, to work upon your hearts this great Truth.

1. *That by theſe croſs Providences, God is faithfully purſuing the great deſign of electing Love upon the ſouls of his people, and orders all theſe afflictions as means ſanctified to that end.*

Afflictons fall not out by *Caſualty*, but by *Counſel*. *Job* 5.6. *Eph.* 1.11. by this Counſel of God they are ordained as means of ſuch ſpiritual good to Saints, *Iſa.* 27.9 *By this ſhall the iniquity of* Jacob *be purged.* &c. Heb. 12. 10. *But he for our profit,* &c. Rom. 8. 28. *All things work together*

gether for good, they are Gods Workmen upon our hearts, to pull down the pride and carnal ſecurity of them; and being ſo, their nature is changed; they are turned into bleſſings and benefits, *Pſal.* 119. 71. *It is good for me that I have been afflicted.* And ſure then, thou haſt no reaſon to quarrel with, but rather to admire that God ſhould concern himſelf ſo much in thy good, to uſe any means for the accompliſhing of it, *Phil.* 3. 11. *Paul could bleſs God if by any means he might attain the Reſurrection of the dead*, my Brethren (ſaith *James*) *count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations*, 1 Jam. 2. 3. My Father is about a deſign of Love upon my ſoul, and do I well to be angry with him? all that he does is in purſuance of, and reference to ſome eternal glorious ends upon my Soul. O 'tis my ignorance of Gods deſign, that makes me quarrel with him! he ſaith to thee in this caſe, as to *Peter*, *What I do thou knoweſt not now, but hereafter thou ſhalt know it.*

2. Help. *Though God hath reſerved to himſelf a liberty of afflicting his people, yet he hath tyed up his own hands by Promiſe, never to take away his loving kindneſs from them.* Can I look that Scripture in the face

face with a repining discontented Spirit, 2 *Sam.* 7. 14. *I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son; if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of Men: nevertheless my mercy shall not depart away from him.* O my heart, my haughty heart; dost thou well to be discontented, when God hath given thee the whole Tree, with all the clusters of comfort growing on it; because he suffers the wind to blow down a few leaves? Christians have two sorts of goods, the goods of the Throne, and the goods of the footstool; Moveables and immoveables; if God have secured these, never let my heart be troubled at the loss of those: indeed, if he had cut off his love, or discovenanted my soul, I had reason to be cast down; but this he hath not, he cannot do:

3. *Help.* It is of marvellous efficacy to keep the heart from sinking under affliction *to call to mind: that thine own father hath the ordering of them:* not a Creature moves hand or tongue against thee, but by his permission. Suppose the cup be a bitter cup, yet 'tis the cup which thy Father hath given thee to drink, and canst thou suspect poyson to be in that cup which he delivers thee? foolish man,

put home the caſe to thine own heart, conſult with thine own bowels; canſt thou find in thy heart to give thy Child that which would hurt and undo him? no, thou wouldſt as ſoon hurt thy ſelf as him; *If thou then being evil, knoweſt how to give good gifts to thy Children*, how much more doth God, *Mat.* 7. 11. the very conſideration of his nature, a God of love, pity, and tender mercies, or of his relation to thee, as a father, husband, friend; might be ſecurity enough, if he had not ſpoken a word to quiet thee in this caſe: and yet you have his word too, *Jer.* 25. 6. *I will do you no hurt.* You lie too near his heart to hurt you, nothing grieves him more than your groundleſs and unworthy ſuſpitions of his deſigns do; would it not grieve a faithful tender-hearted Phyſitian, when he hath ſtudied the caſe of his Patient, prepared the moſt excellent Receipts to ſave his life, to hear him cry out; Oh he hath undone me, he hath poiſoned me; becauſe it gripes and pains him in the operation? Oh when will you be ingenuous!

4. Help. *God reſpects you as much in a low, as in a high condition; and therefore it need not ſo much trouble you to be made low*; nay, to ſpeak home, he manifeſts

more

more of his love, grace and tenderness, in the time of affliction than prosperity: as God did not at first chuse you because you were high, so he will not forsake you because you are low: men may look shie upon you, and alter their respects as your condition is altered: when Providence hath blasted your estates, your Summer friends may grow strange, as fearing you may be troublesome to them, but will God do so; No, no, *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee*, Heb. 13. 5. indeed if adversity and poverty could bar you from access to God, it were a sad condition; but you may go to God as freely as ever, *My God* (saith the Church) *will hear me, Micah* 7. Poor *David*, when stript out of all earthly comforts, could yet encourage himself in the Lord his God, and, why cannot you? Suppose your Husband or Child had lost all at Sea, and should come to you in raggs, Could you deny the relation, or refuse to entertain him? if you would not, much less will God: Why then are you so troubled? though your condition be changed, your Fathers love and respects are not changed.

5. Help. *And what if by the loss of outward comforts, God will preserve your Souls,*

from the ruining power of temptation; ſure then, you have little cauſe to ſink your hearts, by ſuch ſad thoughts about them. Are not theſe earthly enjoyments, the things that make men ſhrink and warp in times of tryal; for the love of theſe many have forſaken Chriſt in ſuch an hour, *Matth.* 19. 22. he went away ſorrowful, for he had great poſſeſſions; and if this be Gods deſign; what have I done in quarrelling with him about it. We ſee Marriners in a ſtorm, can throw over-board rich Bayles of Silk, and precious things, to preſerve the Veſſel and their lives with it, and every one ſaith, they act prudently; we know 'tis uſual for Soldiers in a City beſieged, to batter down or burn the faireſt buildings without the Walls in which the enemy may ſhelter in the Siege, and no man doubts but 'tis wiſely done: ſuch as have gangrened legs or arms, can willingly ſtretch them out to be cut off, and not only thank, but pay the Chyrurgion for his pains; and muſt God only be repined at? for caſting over what would ſink you in a ſtorm? for pulling down that which would advantage your enemy in the Siege of tempration; for cutting off what would endanger your everlaſting life? Oh inconſiderate, ingrateful

grateful Man! are not these things for which thou grievest, the very things that have ruined thousands of souls? Well, what Christ doth in this, thou knowest not now, but hereafter thou maist.

6. *Help.* It would much stay the heart under adversity, to consider, *That God by such humbling providences, may be accomplishing that for which you have long prayed, and waited:* And should you be troubled at that: say Christian, hast thou not many Prayers depending before God upon such accounts as these; that he would keep thee from sin; discover to thee the emptiness and insufficiency of the Creature? That he would kill and mortifie thy lusts, that thy heart may never find rest in any enjoyment but Christ? Why now, by such humbling and impoverishing strokes, God may be fulfilling thy desire: Wouldst thou be kept from sin? lo, *he hath hedged up thy way with thorns:* Wouldst thou see the Creatures vanity: thy affliction is a fair glass to discover it; for the vanity of the creature is never so effectually and sensibly discovered, as in our own experience of it: wouldst thou have thy corruptions mortified? this is the way: Now God takes away the food and fewel that maintained them; for as

prosperity begat, and fed them, so adversity, when sanctified, is a means to kill them. Wouldst thou have thy heart to rest no where but in the bosom of God? What better way canst thou imagine providence should take to accomplish thy desire, than by pulling from under thy head, that soft Pillow of Creature-delights on which thou restedst before? and yet thou fret at this, peevish Child, how dost thou exercise thy Fathers patience! if he delay to answer thy prayers, thou art ready to say he regards thee not; if he do that which really answers the scope and main end of them, but not in the way thou expectedst, thou quarrelledst with him for that; as if in stead of answering, he were crossing all thy hopes and aims: Is this ingenuous? Is it not enough that God is so gracious to do what thou desirest, but thou must be so impudent to expect he should do it in the way which thou prescribest?

7. *Help.* Again, it may stay thy heart, if thou consider; *That in these troubles, God is about that work, which if thou didst see the design of, thy Soul would rejoyce.* We poor creatures are bemisted with much ignorance, and are not able to discern how particular Providences work towards

towards Gods end; and therefore like *Israel* in the Wilderness, are often murmuring because Providence leads us about in a howling Desart, where we are exposed to straits; though yet, then he led them, and is now leading us, *by the right way, to a City of habitations*: if you could but see how God in his secret Counsel hath exactly laid the whole plot and design of thy Salvation; even to the smallest means and circumstances, this way, and by these means; such a one shall be saved, and by no other; such a number of afflictions I appoint for this man, at this time, and in this order; they shall befall him, thus, and thus they shall work for him; could you I say, but discern the admirable harmony of divine dispensations, their mutual relations to each other; together with the general respect and influence they all have into the last end; of all the conditions in the World, you would chuse that you are now in, had you liberty to make your own choice. Providence is like a curious piece of Arras, made up of a thousand shreds: which single we know not what to make of, but put together and stitcht up orderly, they represent a beautiful history to the eye: as God works

all things according to the Counſel of his own Will: So that counſel of God hath ordained this, as the beſt way to bring about thy Salvation: ſuch a one hath a proud heart, ſo many humbling Providences I appoint for him, ſuch an one an earthly heart; ſo many impoveriſhing providences for him: Did you but ſee this, I need ſay no more to ſupport the moſt dejected heart.

8. *Help.* Farther, it would much conduce to the ſettlement of your hearts to conſider, *that by fretting and diſcontent you do your ſelves more injury than all the afflictions you lie under could do*; Your own diſcontent is that which arms your troubles with a ſting, 'tis you that make your burthen heavy, by ſtrugling under it; could you but lie quiet under the hand of God, your condition would be much eaſier and ſweeter than it is: *impatiens ægrotus crudelem facit Medicum.* This makes God lay on more ſtrokes, as a Father will upon a ſtubborn Child that receives not correction.

Beſides, it unfits the ſoul to pray over its troubles; or take in the ſenſe of that good which God intends by them, affliction is a pill, which being wrapt up in patience, and quiet ſubmiſſion, may be

easily swallowed; but discontent chews the pill, and so imbitters the soul; God throws away some comfort which he saw would hurt you, and you will throw away your peace after it; he shoots an Arrow which sticks in your cloaths, and was never intended to hurt, but only to fright you from sin: and you will thrust it onward to the piercing of your very hearts, by despondency and discontent.

9. *Help.* Lastly, if all this will not do, but thy heart (like *Rachel*) still refuses to be comforted or quieted, then consider one thing more; which if seriously pondered, will doubtless do the work; and that is this: *Compare the condition thou art now in (and art so much dissatisfied with) with that condition others are, and thy self deservest to be in*: others are roaring in flames, howling under the scourge of vengeance, and amongst them I deserve to be. Oh my Soul! is this hell? is my condition as bad as the damned? O what would thousands now in hell, give to change conditions with me? it is a famous instance which Doctor *Taylor* gives us of the Duke of *Conde*, I have read (saith he) that when the Duke of *Conde* had entred voluntarily into the incommodities of a Religious poverty,

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poverty, he was one day eſpied and pittied by a Lord of *Italy*, who out of tenderneſs wiſhed him to be more careful and nutritive of his perſon: the good Duke anſwered, Sir, be not troubled; and think not that I am ill provided of conveniencies: for I ſend an *Harbinger* before me, who makes ready my lodgings, and takes care that I be royally entertained. The Lord asked him who was his *Harbinger?* He anſwered, the knowledge of my ſelf, and the conſideration of what I deſerve for my ſins, which is eternal torments; and when with this knowledge I arrive at my lodging, how unprovided ſoever I find it; methinks it is ever better than I deſerve. *Why doth the living Man complain?* and thus the Heart may be kept from deſponding or repining under adverſity.

3. *Seaſon.* The third Seaſon calling "for more than ordinary diligence to "keep the Heart, in the time of *Sions* "troubles; when the Church, like the Ship "in which Chriſt and his Diſciples were, "is oppreſſed and ready to periſh in the "waves of perſecution, then good Souls "are ready to ſink and be Shipwrackt too "upon the billows of their own fear. I "confeſs moſt Men rather need the ſpur, than

" than the Reyns in this caſe, and yet " ſome ſit down as over-weighed with " the ſenſe of the Churches troubles; the " loſs of the *Ark* coſt old *Eli* his life, " the ſad poſture *Jeruſalem* lay in, made " good *Nehemiahs* countenance change in " the midſt of all the pleaſures and accom- " modations of the Court, *Neh.* 2. 2. ah " this goes cloſe to honeſt hearts.

" But though God allow, yea, com- " mand the moſt awakened apprehen- " ſions of theſe calamities, and in ſuch a " *day call to mourning and weeping, girding* " *with ſackcloth, Iſa.* 22. 12. and ſeverely " threatens the inſenſible, *Amos* 6. 1. yet " it will not pleaſe him to ſee you ſit " like penſive *Elijah* under the Juniper " tree, 1 *Kings* 19. 4. *Ah Lord God!* " *it is enough, take away my life alſo*; no, " mourners in *Sion* you may, and ought " to be; but ſelf-tormentors you muſt " not be: complain to God you may, " but to complain of God (though but " by an unſuitable carriage and the lan- " guage of your actions) you muſt " not.

3. *Caſe.* The third Caſe that comes next to be ſpoken to is this, *How publick and tender hearts may be relieved and ſup- ported when they are even over-wighed with*

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the burdenſome ſenſe of Sions trouble. "I "grant, it is hard for him that prefer- "reth *Sion* to his chief joy, to keep "his heart that it ſink not below the "due ſenſe of its troubles; and yet "this ought and may be done by the uſe "of ſuch heart-eſtabliſhing directions as "theſe.

1. Direct. *Settle this great truth in your hearts, that no trouble befalls Sion, but by the permiſſion of Sions God; and he permits nothing out of which he will not bring much good at laſt to his people.*

There is as truly a principle of quietneſs in the permitting as in the commanding will of God. See it in *David*, 2 *Sam.* 16. 10. *Let him alone, it may be God hath bidden him*: and in Chriſt *John* 19. 11. *Thou couldſt have no power againſt me except it were given thee from above*, it ſhould much calm our ſpirits, that it is the will of God to ſuffer it; and had not he ſuffered it, it could never have been as it is.

This very conſideration quieted *Job*, *Eli*, *David*, and *Hezekiah*, that the Lord did it, was enough to them: and why ſhould it not be ſo to us? if the Lord will have *Sion* ploughed as a field, and her goodly ſtones lye in the duſt; if it be his pleaſure that *Antichriſt* ſhall rage longer,

er, and wear out the Saints of the moſt high: if it be his will, that a day of trouble and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord God of Hoſts ſhall be upon the Valley of Viſion, that the wicked ſhall devour the man that is more righteous than he, what are we that we ſhould conteſt with God? fit it is, that we ſhould be reſigned up to that will whence we proceeded; and he that made us ſhould diſpoſe of us as he pleaſeth: he may do what ſeemeth him good without our conſent: doth poor man ſtand upon equal ground, that he ſhould capitulate with his Creator, or that God ſhould render him an account of any of his matters? its every way as reaſonable we be content however God diſpoſe of us, as that we be obedient to whatſoever he commands us.

But then, if we purſue this argument further, by conſidering that Gods permiſſions do all meet at laſt in the real good of his people, this will much more quiet our ſpirits. Do the Enemies carry away the good Figs, even the beſt among the People into Captivity; this looks like a ſad Providence: but yet, God ſends them thither for their good, *Jer.* 24. 5. doth God take the *Aſſyrian* as a

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staff in his hand to beat his People with? those blows are smart, and make them cry; but the end of his so doing is, *that he may accomplish his whole work upon Mount Sion, Isa.* 10. 12. If God can bring much good out of the worst and greatest evil of sin; much more out of temporal afflictions, and it is as evident that he will, as that he can do so. For it is inconsistent with the wisdom of a common Agent; to permit any thing (which he might prevent if he pleased) to cross his great design and end; and can it be imagined that the most wise God should do so.

Well then, as *Luther* told *Melanchon*, *desinat Philippus esse rector mundi*: so say I to you, let infinite wisdom, power, and love alone; for by these all Creatures are swayed and actions guided, in reference to the Church. Its none of our work to rule the World, but to submit to him that doth, *non cæco impetu volvuntur rotæ* the motions of Providence are all judicious, the wheels are full of eyes: it is enough that the affairs of *Sion* are in a good hand.

2. *Direct.* Ponder this heart-suporting truth, in reference to *Sions* trouble. *That how many troubles soever are upon her, yet her King is in her.*

What?

What? Hath the Lord forſaken his Churches? Hath he ſold them into the enemies hand? doth he not regard what evil befalls them? that our Hearts ſink at this rate? Is it not too ſhameful an undervaluing of the great God? and too much magnifying of poor impotent Man to fear and tremble at Creatures, whileſt God is in the midſt of us? The Churches Enemies are many and mighty, let that be granted; yet that Argument with which *Caleb* and *Joſhua* ſtrove to raiſe their own hearts, is of as much force now as it was then: *The Lord is with us, fear them not, Numb.* 14. 9. The Hiſtorian tells us, that when *Antigonus* over-heard his Souldiers reckoning how many their Enemies were, and ſo Diſcouraging one another; he ſuddenly ſteps in among them with this Queſtion, *and how many* (ſaid he) *do you reckon me for?* diſcouraged ſouls? How many do you reckon the Lord for? is he not an over-match for all his Enemies? is not one Almighty more than many mighties? doth his preſence ſtand for nothing with us? *If God be for us who can be againſt us?* Rom. 8. 31. What think you was the reaſon of that great Exploration *Gideon* made in *Judges* 6. He queſtions, *ver.* 12. 13. he deſires

desires a sign; *v.* 17. and after that another, *ver.* 36. and what was the end of all this? but that he might be sure the Lord was with him, and that he might but write this Motto upon his Ensign. *The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon.* So then if you can be well assured, the Lord is with his people, you will get thereby above all your discouragements; and that he is so, you need not (with him) desire a sign from Heaven, lo, you have a sign before you, even their marvellous preservation amidst all their enemies. If God be not with his people, how is it they are not swallowed up quick? Do their enemies want malice, power, or opportunity? no, but there is an invisible hand upon them. Well then, as it is *Exod.* 33. 14. Let his presence give us rest; and though the Mountains be hurled into the Sea, though Heaven and Earth mingle together; fear not, God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved.

3. Direct. *Ponder the great advantages attending the people of God in an afflicted condition.* If a low and an afflicted state in the world be really best for the Church, then your dejections are not only irrational, but ungrateful: indeed if ye estimate the happiness of the Church by its worldly

worldly eaſe, ſplendor and proſperity, then ſuch times will ſeem bad for it; but you reckon its glory to conſiſt in is humility, faith, patience, and heavenly mindedneſs, no condition in the World abounds with advantages for theſe as an afflicted condition doth. It was not perſecutions and priſons, but worldlineſs and wantonneſs that was the poiſon of the Church; neither was it the earthly glory of its *Profeſſors*, but the bloud of its *Martyrs* that was the ſeed of the Church. The power of godlineſs did never thrive better than in affliction, and never ran lower than in times of greateſt proſperity: when *we are left a poor and an afflicted people, then we learn to truſt in the name of the Lord*; *Zeph.* 3. 12. What ſay ye Sirs? Is it indeed for the Saints advantage to be weaned from the loves and delights of enſnaring worldly vanities? to be quickned and prickt forward with more haſt to Heaven, to have clearer diſcoveries of their own hearts, to be taught to pray more fervently, frequently, ſpiritually, to look and long for the reſt to come more ardently? if this be for their advantage, experience teacheth us, that no condition is ordinarily bleſt with ſuch fruits as theſe, like an afflicted condition.

And is it well done then to repine and droop becauſe your Father conſults more the advantage of your ſouls, than the pleaſing of your humours? becauſe he will bring you a nearer way to Heaven than you are willing to go? Is this a due requital of his love, who is pleaſed ſo much to concern himſelf in your welfare? which is more then he will do for thouſands in the World, upon whom he will not lay a Rod, or ſpend an affliction for their good, *Hoſ.* 4. 17. *Matth.* 15. 14. But alaſs! We judge by ſenſe, and reckon things good or evil, according to what we for the preſent can taſte and feel in them.

4. Direct. *Take heed that you overlook not the many precious mercies which the people of God enjoy amidſt all their trouble.*

'Tis pity that our tears on the account of our troubles, ſhould ſo blear and blind our eyes, that we ſhould not ſee our mercies and grounds of comfort. I will not inſiſt upon the mercy of having your lives given you for a prey, nor yet upon the many outward comforts, temporal conveniences, and accomodations, which you enjoy even above what Chriſt and his precious ſervants, of whom the world was not worthy, ever had.

But what ſay you to pardon of ſin? Intereſt in Chriſt? the Covenant of Promiſes? And an eternity of happineſs in the preſence of God after a few days are over? O that ever a People entituled to ſuch mercies as theſe, ſhould droop under any temporal affliction, or be ſo much concerned for the frowns of Men, and loſs of trifles! You have not the ſmiles of great Men, but you have the favour of the great God: You are it may be caſt back in your eſtates, but thereby farthered in ſpirituals. You cannot live ſo bravely, plentifully, and eaſily as before, but ſtill you may live as holy and heavenly as ever. Will you then grieve ſo much for theſe *circumſtantials*, as to forget your *ſubſtantials?* Shall light troubles make you forget weighty mercies? Remember the Churches true Riches are laid out of the reach of all its enemies: they may make you poor but not miſerable. What though God do not diſtinguiſh in his outward diſpenſations betwixt his own and others; yea, What though his Judgments ſingle out the beſt, and ſpare the worſt? that though an *Abel* be killed in love, and a *Cain* ſurvive in hatred, a bloudy *Dyoniſius* die in his bed, and a good *Joſiah* fall in Battle? What

though the belly of the wicked be filled with hid Treaſures, and the teeth of the Saints broken with Gravel-ſtones, yet ſtill here is much matter of praiſe; for electing love hath diſtinguiſhed, though common Providence did not, and whilſt proſperity and impunity ſlay the wicked, even ſlaying and adverſity ſhall benefit and ſave the righteous.

5. Direct. *Believe, that how low ſoever the Church be plunged under the waters of adverſity, it ſhall aſſuredly riſe again.* Fear not, for as ſure as Chriſt aroſe the third day, notwithſtanding the Seal and watch that was upon him; ſo ſure the Church ſhall ariſe out of all her troubles, and lift up its victorious head above all its enemies: there's no fear of ruining that people that thrive by their loſſes; and multiply by being diminiſhed. O be not too quick to bury the Church before ſhe be dead! ſtay till Chriſt hath tryed his skill before you give it up for loſt; the buſh may be all in a flame, but ſhall never be conſumed, and that becauſe of the good will of him that dwelleth in the Buſh.

6. Direct. *Record the famous inſtances of Gods care and tenderneſs over his people in former ſtraits.* Chriſt hath not ſuffered

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it to be devoured yet; for above theſe 1600 years the Chriſtian Church hath lived in affliction, and yet it is not conſumed: many a wave of perſecution hath gone over it, and yet it is not drowned; many deſigns to ruine it, and hitherto none hath proſpered: this is not the firſt time that *Hamans* and *Achitophels* have plotted its ruine; that an *Herod* hath ſtretcht out his hand to vex it. Still it hath been preſerved from, ſupported under, or delivered out of all its troubles: and is it not as dear to God as ever? Is not he as able to ſave it now as formerly? though we know not whence Deliverance ſhould ariſe, *Yet the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 9.

7. *Direct.* If you can fetch no comfort from any of the former Arguments, then in the laſt place, *try whether you cannot draw ſome comfort out of your very trouble.* Surely this trouble of yours is a good argument of your integrity; union is the ground of ſympathy, if you had not ſome rich adventure in that Ship, you would not tremble as you do when it is in danger: beſides this frame of ſpirit may afford you this argument, that if you be ſo ſenſible of the Churches troubles,

Jesus Christ is much more sensible of, and solicitous about it than you can be; and he will cast an eye of favour upon them that mourn for it, *Isa.* 57. 18.

4. *Season.* "The fourth special Season "for expressing our utmost diligence in "keeping our hearts is the time of dan- "ger and publick distraction: in such "times the best hearts are but too apt to "be surprized by slavish fear, it is not "easie to secure the heart against *distra-* "*ction* in times of common *destruction:* "if *Syria* be confederate with *Ephraim*, "how doth the hearts of the house of *Da-* "*vid* shake, even as the trees of the wood "which are shaken with the wind, *Isa.* 7. "2. when there are ominous signs in the "heavens, on the earth distress of Na- "tions, with perplexity; the Sea and "waves roaring, then the hearts of Men "fail for fear, and for looking after those "things which are coming on the earth, "*Luke* 21. 25, 26. even a *Paul* himself "may *sometimes complain of fightings* "*within; when there are fears without,* "2 *Cor.* 7. 5.

But my Brethren these things ought not to be so: Saints should be of a more raised spirit: so was *David* when his heart was kept in a good frame, *Ps.* 27. 1.

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The Lord is my light and my Salvation, whom ſhall I fear? the Lord is the ſtrength of my life, of whom ſhall I be afraid? Let none but the *ſervants* of *ſin* be the *ſlaves* of *fear*, let them that have delighted in evil, fear evil, *impius tantum metuit, quantum nocuit.* O let not that which God hath threatned as a Judgment upon the wicked, ever ſeize upon the breaſts of the righteous; *I will ſend* (ſaith God) *faintneſs into their hearts in the land of their enemies, and the ſound of a ſhaking leaf ſhall chaſe them,* Lev. 26. 36. O what poor ſpirited men were theſe, to flie at a ſhaking leaf! which makes a pleaſant, and not a terrible noiſe, and is in it ſelf a kind of natural muſick; but to a guilty Conſcience, the whiſtling leaves are Drums and Trumpets: *but God hath not given us the ſpirit of fear, but of love, and of a ſound mind,* 2 Tim. 1. 7. A ſound mind as it ſtands there in oppoſition to the ſpirit of fear, is an unwounded Conſcience, not infirmed by guilt: and this ſhould make a man as bold as a Lyon. I know it cannot be ſaid of a Saint, what God ſpake of *Leviathan*, that he is made without fear: there is a natural fear in every man, and it's as impoſſible to be wholly put off, as the body it ſelf is: *'tis a per-*

bation of the mind, rising from the apprehension of approaching danger; and as long as dangers can approach us, we shall find some perturbations within us. 'Tis not my purpose to commend to you a *Stoical apathy*, nor yet to take you off from such a degree of cautional preventive fear as may fit you for troubles, and be serviceable to your souls. There is a provident fear that opens our eyes to foresee danger, and quickens to a prudent and lawful use of means to prevent it; such was *Jacobs* fear, *Gen.* 32. 7, 9, 10. *&c.* but it is the *fear of diffidence*. I perswade you to keep your hearts from that Tyrannical passion which invades the heart in times of danger, distracts, weakens, and unfits the heart for duty, drives men upon unlawful means, and brings a snare with it. Well then, the fourth Case will be this.

4. Case. "*How a Christian may keep* "*his heart from distracting and tormenting* "*fears in times of great and threatning* "*dangers.*

Now there are fourteen excellent Rules or helps for the keeping of the heart from sinful fear when eminent dangers threaten us: and the first is this,

1. Rule. *Look upon all the Creatures as*

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in the hand of God, who manages them in all their motions; limiting, reſtraining, and determining them all at his pleaſure.

Get this great truth well ſetled by faith in your hearts it will marvelouſly guard them againſt ſlaviſh fears, the 1 of *Ezek.* contains an admirable *ſcheam* or *draught* of Providence; there you may ſee the living Creatures who move the wheels, *viz.* the great affairs and turnings of things here below, coming unto Chriſt, who ſits upon the Throne to receive new orders and inſtructions from him, *ver.* 24, 25, 26. and in *Rev.* 6. you read of white, black, and red Horſes, which are nothing elſe but the inſtruments which God employs in executing his Judgments in the World, as Wars, Peſtilence and Death; but when theſe Horſes are prancing and trampling up and down the world; here is that may quiet our hearts, that God hath the Reins in his hand. Wicked men are ſometimes like mad Horſes, they would ſtamp the people of God under their feet but that the bridle of Providence is in their lips, *Job.* 1. 11, 12. A Lion at liberty is terrible to meet, but who is afraid of the Lion in the keepers hand.

2. Rule. *Remember that this God in whoſe*

whose hand all the Creatures are, is your Father, and is much more tender over you than you are or can be over your selves: He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine Eye, Zech. 2. 8. Let me ask the most timerous Woman, whether there be not a vast difference betwixt the sight of a drawn sword in the hand of a bloody Ruffian, and the same sword in the hand of her own tender Husband? as great a difference there is in looking upon Creatures by an eye of sense, and looking on them as in the hand of your God by an eye of Faith; that is a sweet Scripture to this purpose, *Isa.* 54. 5. *Thy Maker is thine Husband. The Lord of Hosts is his Name*; He is Lord of all the Hosts of Creatures in the world: who would be afraid to pass through an Army, though all the Souldiers should turn their Swords and Guns towards him, if the General of that Army were his friend or Father? I have met with an excellent Story of a religious young man, who being at Sea with many other passengers in a great storm, and they being half dead with fear, he only was observed to be very chearful, as if he had been but little concerned in that danger; one of them demanding a reason of his chearfulness,

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Oh, ſaid he, *'tis becauſe the Pilot of the ſhip is my Father.* Conſider Chriſt, firſt as the King and Supremam Lord over the Providential Kingdom, and then as your head, Husband and friend, and thou wilt quickly ſay, *Return unto thy Reſt O my Soul.* This truth will make you ceaſe trembling, and fall a Singing in the midſt of dangers, *Pſal.* 47. 7. *The Lord is King of all the earth, ſing ye Praiſe with underſtanding*, or as the *Hebrew* is, *every one that hath underſtanding*, viz. of this *Heart* reviving and eſtabliſhing Doctrine of the Dominion of our Father over all the Creatures.

3. Rule. *Urge upon your hearts the expreſs prohibition of Chriſt in this Caſe; and let your hearts ſtand in awe of the violations of them.*

He hath charged you not to fear, *Luke* 21. 9. *When ye ſhall hear of Wars and commotions, ſee that ye be not terrified.* And *Phil.* 1. 28. *In nothing be terrified by your adverſaries:* yea in *Matth.* 10. 26, 8, 31. and within the compaſs of ſix verſes, our Saviour commands us thrice, *not to fear man.* Doth every big word of proud duſt and aſhes make thee afraid? doth the voice of a Man make thee tremble? and ſhall not the voice of God? If thou

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art of ſuch a fearful and timerous ſpirit, how is it that thou feareſt not to diſobey the flat commands of *Jeſus Chriſt*? Methinks the Command of Chriſt ſhould have as much power to calm, as the voice of a poor worm to terrifie thy heart, *Iſa.* 51. 12, 13. *Even I am he that comforteth you, who art thou that thou ſhouldeſt be afraid of a man that ſhall die? and of the Son of Man that ſhall be made as the graſs, and forgetteſt the Lord thy Maker?* We cannot fear creatures ſinfully, till we have forgotten God; did we remember what he is, and what he hath ſaid, we ſhould not be of ſuch feeble ſpirits: bring thy heart then to this *Dilemma* in times of danger; if I let into my heart the ſlaviſh fear of Man, I muſt let out the reverential awe and fear of God: and dare I caſt off the fear of the Almighty for the frowns of a man? ſhall I lift up proud duſt above the great God? ſhall I run upon a certain ſin, to ſhun a probable danger? Oh keep thy heart by that conſideration.

4. Rule. *Remember how much needleſs trouble your vain fears have brought upon you formerly, and how you have diſquieted your ſelves to no purpoſe.*

Iſa. 51. 13. *And haſt feared continu-*

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ally because of the oppressor, as if he were ready to devour: and where is the fury of the Oppressor? he seem'd ready to devour, but yet you are not devoured; I have not brought upon you the thing that you feared; you have wasted your spirits, disordered your Souls, and weakened your hands, and all this to no purpose. You might have all this while enjoyed your peace, and possessed your souls in patience. And here I cannot but observe a very deep policy of Satan managing a design against the Soul by these vain fears: I call them vain in regard of the frustration of them by providence, but certainly they are not in vain as to the end Satan aims at in raising them, for herein he acts as Souldiers use to do in the Siege of a Garrison, who on purpose to wear out the besieged by constant watchings, and thereby unfit them to make resistance when they storm it in earnest, do every night give them false Alarms, which though they come to nothing yet do notably serve this further design of the enemy. O when will you beware of Satans devices.

5. Rule, Consider Solemnly, *That though the things you fear should really fall out, yet there is more evil in your own fear than in the thing feared.* And

And that not only as the leaſt evil of ſin, is worſe than the greateſt evil of ſuffering; but as this ſinful fear hath really more torment and trouble in it than is in that condition you are ſo much afraid of, fear is both a multiplying and a tormenting paſſion; it repreſents troubles much greater than they are, and ſo tortures and wracks the Soul much worſe than when the ſuffering it ſelf comes. So it was with *Iſrael* at the Red Sea, they cryed out, and were ſore afraid till they put foot into the water, and then a paſſage was opened through thoſe waters which they thought would have drowned them. Thus it is with us, we looking through the glaſs of a carnal fear, upon the waters of trouble, the ſwellings of *Jordan*, cry out; Oh they are unſoardble! we muſt needs periſh in them: but when we come into the midſt of thoſe Floods indeed, we find the Promiſe made good, *God will make a way to eſcape*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. Thus it was with bleſſed *Bilney*, when he would make a tryal by putting his finger to the candle, and not able to endure that, he cryed out, What, cannot I bear the burning of a finger? How then ſhall I be able to bear the burning of my whole body to morrow? and

yet

yet when that morrow came, he could go chearfully into the flames with that Scripture in his mouth, *Iſa.* 43. 1, 2, 3. *Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine; when thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will be with thee, when thou walkeſt through the fire thou ſhalt not be burnt.*

6. Rule. *Conſult the many precious promiſes which are written for your ſupport and comfort in all dangers.*

Theſe are your refuges to which you may flye and be ſafe; *when the arrows of danger flye by night, and deſtruction waſteth at noon day.* There are particular Promiſes ſuited to particular Caſes and exigencies, and there are general Promiſes reaching all Caſes and Conditions: ſuch are theſe, *Rom.* 8. 28. *All things ſhall work together for good,* &c. And *Eccleſ.* 8. 12. *Though a ſinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet it ſhall be well with them that fear the Lord,* &c. *Could you but believe the Promiſes, your hearts ſhould be eſtabliſhed,* 2 Chr. 20. 29. Could you but plead them with God, as *Jacob* did, *Gen.* 32. 12. *Thou ſaidſt, I will ſurely do thee good,* &c. they would relieve you in every diſtreſs.

Object. *But that promiſe was made perſonally*

ſonally and by name to him, ſo are not theſe to me.

Anſw. If *Jacobs* God be your God, you have as good an intereſt in them as he had. The Church a thouſand years after that tranſaction betwixt God and *Jacob*, applyed that which God ſpake to him, as if it had been ſpoken to themſelves, *Hoſ.* 12. 4. *He found him in* Bethel, *and there he ſpake with us.*

7. Rule. *Quiet your trembling hearts by recording and conſulting your paſt experiences of the care and faithfulneſs of God in former diſtreſſes.*

Theſe experiences are food for your Faith in a wilderneſs condition, *Pſal.* 74. 14. By this *David* kept his heart in time of danger, 1 *Sam.* 17. 37. and *Paul* his, 2 *Cor.* 1. 10. It was ſweetly anſwered by *Silentiarius*, when one told him, that his enemies way-laid him to take away his life, *Si Deus mei curam non habet, quid vivo?* if God take no care of me, how have I eſcaped hitherto? you may plead with God old experiences to procure new ones, for it is in pleading with God for new deliverances, as it is in pleading for new pardons. Now mark how *Moſes* pleads on that account with God, *Numb.* 14. 19. *Pardon I beſeech thee the iniquity*

of

of this people, as thou haſt forgiven them from Egypt *untill now.* He doth not ſay as men do, Lord this is the firſt fault, thou haſt not been troubled before to ſign their pardon: but Lord, becauſe thou haſt pardoned them ſo often; I beſeech thee pardon them once again. So in new ſtraits, Lord thou haſt often heard, helpt and ſaved, in former fears, therefore now help again, for with thee there is plenteous redemption, and thine arm is not ſhortned.

8. Rule. *Be well ſatisfied that you are in the way of your duty, and that will beget holy courage in times of danger.*

Who will harm you, if you be followers of that which is good? 1 Pet. 3. 13. Or, if any dare attempt it, *you may boldly commit your ſelves to God in well doing*, 1 *Pet.* 4. 19. 'Twas this conſideration that raiſed *Luthers* Spirit above all fear: In the cauſe of God (ſaid he) I ever am, and ever ſhall be ſtout; herein I aſſume this Title, *Cedo nulli*, a good cauſe will bear up a mans ſpirit bravely. Hear the ſaying of a *Heathen* to the ſhame of cowardly *Chriſtians*: *When the Emperour* Veſpaſian *had commanded* Fluidius Priſcus *not to come to the Senate, or if he did to ſpeak*

Char. of Wiſdom, p. 358.

nothing but what he would have him; The Senator returned this noble anſwer: *That as he was a Senator, it was fit he ſhould be at the Senate; and if being there he were required to give his advice, he would ſpeak freely that which his Conſcience commanded him; the Emperour threatning, that then he ſhould die.* He anſwered, *Did I ever tell you that I was immortal? Do you what you will, and I will do what I ought; it is in your power to put me to death unjuſtly, and in me to die conſtantly.*

Righteouſneſs is a Breaſt-plate, the Cauſe of God will pay all your expences, let them tremble whom danger finds out of the way of duty.

9. Rule. *Get your Conſciences ſprinkled with the blood of Chriſt from all guilt, and that will ſet your hearts above all fear.*

'Tis guilt upon the conſcience that ſoftens and cowardizes our ſpirits; *The righteous is bold as a Lyon.* Prov. 28. 1. 'Twas guilt in *Cains* Conſcience that made him cry, *every one that meets me will ſlay me*; Gen. 4. 14. A guilty Conſcience is more terrified with conceited dangers, than a pure Conſcience is with real ones. A guilty ſinner carries a witneſs againſt himſelf in his own boſome. 'Twas guilty *Herod* cryed out, *John Baptiſt is riſen from*

from the dead. Such a Conſcience is the Devils Anvil, on which he fabricates all thoſe ſwords and Spears, with which the guilty ſinner pierces and wounds himſelf. Guilt is to danger, what fire is to Gunpowder; a man need not fear to walk among many barrels of powder, if he have no fire about him.

10. Rule. *Exerciſe holy truſt in times of greateſt diſtreſs.*

Make it your buſineſs to truſt God with your lives and comforts, and then your hearts will be at reſt about them. So did *David*, *Pſal.* 57. 3. *At what time I am afraid I will truſt in thee*, q. d. Lord, if at any time a ſtorm riſe, I will make bold to ſhelter from it under the Covert of thy wings. Go to God by acts of faith and truſt, and never doubt but he will ſecure you, *Iſa.* 62. 3. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee; becauſe he truſteth in thee*; God takes it well when thou comeſt to him thus; Father, my life, my liberty, or eſtate are hunted after, and I cannot ſecure them: O let me leave them in thy hand; *the poor leaveth himſelf with thee:* and, doth his God fail him? no, *Thou art the helper of the Fatherleſs*, *Pſalm* 10. 14. that is, Thou art the helper of the deſtitute one,

that hath none to go to but God. And that is a ſweet Scripture, *Pſal.* 112. 7. *He ſhall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, truſting in the Lord*: he doth not ſay his ear ſhall be priviledged from the report of evil tidings, he may hear as ſad tidings as other men; but his heart ſhall be priviledged from the terrour of thoſe tidings, *his heart is fixed.*

11. Rule. *Conſult the honour of Religion more, and your perſonal ſafety leſs.*

Is it for the honour of Religion, (think you) that Chriſtians ſhould be as timerous as Hares to ſtart at every ſound? Will not this tempt the World to think, that whatever you talk, yet your Principles are no better than other Mens? Oh what miſchief may the diſcoveries of your fears before them do? 'Twas a noble ſaying of *Nehemiah*, Chap. 6. 11. *Should ſuch a man as I flee? and who being as I am ſhould flee?* Were it not better you ſhould dye, than that the World ſhould be prejudiced againſt Chriſt by your example? for alaſs! How apt is the World (who judge more by what they ſee in your practiſes, than by what they underſtand of your principles) to conclude from your timerouſneſs, that how much ſoever you commend faith, and talk

talk of Aſſurance, yet you dare truſt to theſe things no more than they, when it comes to the tryal. O let not your fears lay ſuch a ſtumbling block before the blind world.

12. Rule. *He that will ſecure his heart from fear, muſt firſt ſecure the eternal intereſt of his ſoul in the hands of Jeſus Chriſt.*

When this is done, then you may ſay, *Now World do thy worſt.* You will not be very ſolicitous about a vile body, when you are once aſſured it ſhall be well to all eternity with your precious Souls. *Fear not them* (ſaith Chriſt) *that can kill the body, and after that have no power that they can do.* The aſſured Chriſtian may ſmile with contempt upon all his enemies, and ſay, Is this the worſt that you can do? What ſay you Chriſtians? Are you aſſured that your ſouls are ſafe, that within a few moments of your diſſolution they ſhall be received by Chriſt into everlaſting habitations? Well, if you be ſure of that, never trouble your ſelves about the inſtruments and means of your diſſolution.

Object. *O, but a violent death is terrible Nature.*

Anſw. But what matter is it, when thy

ſoul is in Heaven? Whether it were let out at thy mouth, or at thy throat? whether thy familiar friends, or barbarous enemies ſtand about thy dead body, and cloſe thine eyes? Alaſs, it is not worth the making ſo much ado about, *nihil corpus ſentit in nervo cum anima ſit in cœlo*; thy Soul ſhall not be ſenſible in Heaven, how thy Body is uſed on Earth? no, it ſhall be ſwallowed up in life.

13. Rule. *Learn to quench all ſlaviſh Creature fears, in the reverential fear of God*

This is a cure by diverſion: 'tis a rare piece of Chriſtian wiſdom to turn thoſe paſſions of the ſoul which moſt predominate into ſpiritual channels, to turn natural anger into ſpiritual zeal, natural mirth into holy chearfulneſs, and naral fear into an holy dread and awe of God. This method of Cure Chriſt preſcribes in that forementioned place, *Mat.* 10. like to which is that in *Iſa.* 8. 12, 13. *Fear not their fear:* But, how ſhall we help it? Why, *ſanctifie the Lord of Hoſts himſelf, and let him be your fear and your dread.* Natural fear may be allayed for preſent by natural reaſon, or the removal of the occaſion, but then 'tis but like a Candle blown out with a puff of breath

breath, which is eaſily blown in again, but if the fear of God exſtinguiſh it, then 'tis like a Candle quencht in water, which cannot eaſily be re-kindled.

14. Rule. Laſtly, *Pour out thoſe fears to God in prayer, which the Devil and your own unbelief, pour in upon you in times of danger.*

Prayer is the beſt out-let to fear: where is the Chriſtian that cannot ſet his *probatum eſt* to this direction? I will give you the greateſt Example in the World to encourage you in the uſe of it, even the example of Jeſus Chriſt, *Mark* 14. 32. When the hour of his danger and death drew nigh; He gets into the Garden, ſeparates from the Diſciples, and there wreſtles mightily with God in Prayer, even unto an Agony: in reference to which the Apoſtle ſaith, *Heb.* 5. 7. *Who in the days of his fleſh, when he had offered up prayers and ſupplications, with ſtrong cries and tears, to him that was able to ſave him from death, and was heard in that he feared:* he was heard as to ſtrength and ſupport to carry him through it, though not as to deliverance, or exemption from it.

Now, Oh that theſe things might abide with you, and be reduced to pra-

ctice in these evil days, that many trembling souls may be established by them.

5. *Seas.* "The fifth Season to excite "this diligence in keeping the heart, is "the time of straits and outward pinch- "ing wants; although at such times "we should complain to God, and not "of God, (the Throne of Grace being e- "rected for a time of need, *Heb.* 4. 16.) "yet when the waters of relief run low "and wants begin to pinch hard: how "prone are the best hearts to distrust "the Fountain! when the Meal in the "Barrel, and Oyl in the Cruse are almost "spent, our faith and patience are almost "spent too: Now 'tis difficult to keep "down the proud and unbelieving "heart in an holy quietude and sweet "submission at the foot of God. 'Tis an "easie thing to talk of trusting God for "daily Bread while we have a full Barn "or Purse; but to say as the Prophet, "*Hab.* 3. 17. *Though the Fig-tree should "not blossom, neither fruit be in the Vine,* "&c. *yet will I rejoyce in the Lord.* Sure this is not easie. The fifth case therefore shall be this.

5. *Case. How a Christian may keep his heart from distrusting God, or repining against him when outward wants are either felt or feared.* This

This caſe deſerves to be ſeriouſly pondred, and eſpecially to be ſtudied now; ſince it ſeems to be the deſign of Providence to empty the people of God of their creature fulneſs, and acquaint them with thoſe ſtraits which hitherto they have been altogether ſtrangers to.

Now to ſecure the heart from the forementioned danger attending this condition, theſe following Conſiderations through the bleſſing of the Spirit may prove effectual. And the firſt is this:

1. Conſid. *That if God reduce you to ſtraits and neceſſities, yet he deals no otherwiſe therein with you; than he hath done with ſome of the choiceſt and holieſt men that ever lived.*

Your condition is not ſingular, though you have hitherto been ſtrangers to wants, other Saints have daily converſed, and been familiarly acquainted with them. Hear what bleſſed *Paul* ſpeaks, not of himſelf only, but in the names of other Saints reduced to like exigencies, 1 *Cor.* 4. 11. *Even to this preſent hour we both hunger and thirſt, and are naked and buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place.* To ſee ſuch a man as *Paul* going up and down the World with a naked back, and empty belly, and not a houſe

houſe to put his head in, one that was ſo far above thee in Grace and Holineſs, one that did more ſervice for God in a day, than perhaps thou haſt done him all thy dayes, and yet thou repine as if hardly dealt with! Have you forgot what neceſſities and ſtraits, even a *David* hath ſuffered? How great were his ſtraits and neceſſities 1 *Sam.* 25. 8. *Give I pray thee*, (ſaith he to *Nabal*) *whatſoever cometh to thy hand, to thy ſervants and to thy Son David.* Renowned *Muſculus* was forced to dig in the Town-ditch for a maintainance. Famous *Ainſworth* (as I have been credibly informed) forced to ſell the Bed he lay on to buy him Bread. But what ſpeak I of theſe: behold a greater than any of them, even the Son of God, *who is the Heir of all things, and by whom the worlds were made*: yet ſometime would have been glad of any thing having nothing to eat, *Mark* 11. 12. *And on the morrow when they were come from* Bethany, *he was hungry; and ſeeing a fig-tree a far off, having leaves, he came if haply he might find* [*any thing*] *thereon.*

Well then, hereby God hath ſet no mark of hatred upon you; neither can you infer the want of *love* from the want of *bread.* When thy repining heart puts the

the queſtion, was there ever any ſorrow like unto mine? Ask theſe Worthies, and they will tell thee, though they did not complain and fret as thou doſt, yet they were driven to as great ſtraits as thou art.

2. Conſid. *If God leave you not in this neceſſitous condition without a Promiſe, you have no reaſon to repine or deſpond under it.*

That is a ſad condition indeed, to which no Promiſe belongs. I remember Mr. *Calvin* upon theſe words, *Iſa.* 9. 1. *Nevertheleſs, the dimneſs ſhall not be ſuch as was in her vexation*, &c. Salves the doubt, in what ſenſe the darkneſs of the Captivity was not ſo great, as the leſſer incurſions made by *Tiglath Pileſer.* In the Captivity the City was deſtroyed, and the Temple burnt with fire, there was no compariſon in the affliction; but yet the darkneſs ſhould not be ſuch, and the reaſon (ſaith he) is this, *huic certam promiſſionem eſſe additam, cum in prioribus nulla*, (i. e.) there was a certain Promiſe made to this but none to the other.

'Tis better to be as low as Hell with a Promiſe, than in Paradiſe without one. Even the darkneſs of Hell it ſelf would be comparatively no darkneſs at all,

were

were there but a Promiſe to enlighten it. Now God hath left many ſweet promiſes for the Faith of his poor people to feed on in this condition, ſuch are theſe: *Pſalm* 34. 9, 10. *O fear the Lord ye his Saints, for there is no want to them that fear him; the Lions do lack and ſuffer hunger, but they that fear the Lord ſhall want nothing that is good.* Pſal. 33. 18, 19. *The eye of the Lord is upon the Righteous to keep them alive in famine.* Pſal. 48. 11. *No good thing will he with-hold from them that walk uprightly.* Rom. 8. 32. *He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?* Iſa. 41. 17. *When the poor and the needy ſeek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Iſrael will not forſake them.* Here you ſee, firſt their extream wants, water being put even for the neceſſaries of life, (2) their certain relief; *I the Lord will hear them*; in which it is ſuppoſed, that they cry unto [illegible] in their ſtraits; and he hears their cry.

Having therefore theſe Promiſes, Why ſhould not your miſtruſtful hearts conclude like *David's*, Pſal. 23. 1. *The Lord is my Shepherd, I ſhall not want.*

Obj. *But theſe promiſes imply conditions;*

ditions, if they were abſolute, they would afford more ſatisfaction.

Sol. What are thoſe tacit conditions you ſpeak of, but theſe? (1) That either he will ſupply or ſanctifie your wants; (2) That you ſhall have ſo much as God ſees fit for you, and doth this trouble you? Would you have the Mercy whether ſanctified or no? Whether God ſees it fit for you or no? Methinks the appetites of Saints after earthly things ſhould not be ſo ravenous, to ſeize greedily upon any enjoyment, nor caring how they have it.

But oh, when wants Pinch, and we ſee not whence ſupplies ſhould come, then our faith in the Promiſe ſhakes, and we like murmuring *Iſrael* cry, *He gave bread, can he give water alſo?* O unbelieving hearts! When did his Promiſes fail? Who ever truſted them and was aſhamed? May not God upbraid thee with thine unreaſonable infidelity, as *Jer.* 2. 31. *Have I been a Wilderneſs unto you*, &c. or as Chriſt ſaid to the Diſciples, *Since I was with you, lacked you any thing?* Yea, may you not upbraid your ſelves, may you not ſay with good old *Policarp*, thus many years I have ſerved Chriſt, and found him a Good Maſter; indeed he

may

may deny what your *wantonneſs*, but not what your real *wants* call for: he will not regard the cry of your luſts, nor yet deſpiſe the cry of your faith; though he will not indulge and humour your *wanton appetites*, yet he will not violate his own *faithful Promiſes*. Theſe Promiſes are your beſt ſecurity for *eternal life*, and 'tis ſtrange if they ſhould not ſatisfie you for *daily bread*: remember ye the words of the Lord, and ſolace your hearts with them amidſt all your wants. 'Tis ſaid of *Epicurus*, that in the dreadful fits of the Collick, he often refreſhed himſelf *ob memoriam inventorum*, by calling to mind his inventions in Philoſophy; and of *Poſſidonius* the Philoſopher, that in a great fit of the ſtone, he ſolaced himſelf with diſcourſes of Moral Vertue; and when the pain twinged him, he would ſay, *nihil agis dolor quamvis ſis moleſtus nunquam confitebor te eſſe malum*: Oh pain, thou doſt nothing, though thou art a little troubleſome, I will never confeſs thee to be evil. If upon ſuch grounds as theſe they could ſupport themſelves under ſuch grinding and racking pains, and even delude their diſeaſes by them; how much rather ſhould the precious promiſes of God and the ſweet Experiences which have

have gone along ſtep by ſtep with them, make you to forget all your wants, and comfort you over every ſtrait!

3. Conſid. *If it be bad now, it might have been worſe; hath God denyed thee the comforts of this life; he might have denyed thee Chriſt, peace and pardon alſo, and then thy caſe had been woful indeed.* You know God hath done ſo to Millions in the World: How many ſuch wretched objects may your eyes behold every day, that have no comfort in hand, nor yet in *hope*, are miſerable here, and will be ſo to eternity; that have a bitter cup, and nothing to ſweeten it, no, not ſo much as any hope that it will be better. But it is not ſo with you, though you be poor in this World, *yet rich in faith, and heirs of the Kigdom which God hath promiſed*, *James* 2. 5. O learn to ſet ſpiritual riches over againſt temporal poverty. Ballance all your preſent troubles with your ſpiritual priviledges. Indeed, if God had denyed your ſouls the Robes of Righteouſneſs to cloath them, the hidden Manna to feed them; the heavenly Manſions to receive them, if your ſouls were left deſtitute, as well as your bodies, you might well be penſive; but this conſideration hath enough to bring the conſide-

ring

dering Soul to rest under any outward strait. 'Twas bravely said by *Luther*, when want beganto pinch him, *let us be contented with our hard fare* (saith he) *for do not we feast with Angels upon Christ the bread of life: And blessed be God* (saith *Paul*) *who hath abounded to us in all spiritual blessings*, Eph. 1. 3.

4. Consid. *This affliction, though great, is not such an affliction but God hath far greater, with which he chastises the dearly beloved of his Soul in this world, and should he remove this, and inflict those, you would account your present state a very comfortable state, and bless God to be as now you are.*

What think you Sirs? Should God remove your present troubles, Supply all your outward wants, give you the desire of your hearts in creature-comforts, but hide his face from you, shoot his arrows into your souls, and cause the venom of them to drink up your Spirits? Should he leave you but a few days to the Buffeting of Satan and his blasphemous injections; Should he hold your eyes but a few nights awaking with horrors of Conscience, tossing to and fro till the dawning of the day? Should he lead you through the Chambers of death? Shew you the visions of darkness? and make his

his terrors set themselves in array against you, then tell me if you would not count it a choice mercy to be back again in your former necessitous condition, with peace of Conscience; and count bread and water with Gods favour, a happy state? O then! take heed of repining. Say not, God deals hardly with you, lest you provoke him to convince you by your own sense and feeling, that he hath worse Rods than these for unsubmissive and froward Children.

5. Consid. *If it be bad now, it will be better shortly.*

O keep thy heart by that consideration! The Meal in the Barrel is almost spent; Well, be it so, why should that trouble me? If I am almost beyond the need and use of all these things. The Travellor hath spent almost all his Money, but a shilling or two left, Well (saith he) though my Money be almost spent, yet my journey is almost finished too; I am near home, and then shall be fully supplyed. If there be no Candles in the house, yet 'tis a comfort to think that it's almost day, and then there will be no need of Candles, I am afraid Christian, thou mis-reckonest thy self, when thou thinkest; my provision is almost

ſpent, and I have a great way to travel, many years to live, and nothing to live upon; it may be not half ſo many as thou ſuppoſeſt; in this be confident, if thy proviſion be ſpent, either freſh ſupplies are coming (though thou ſeeſt not from whence) for thou art nearer thy journies end than thou reckoneſt thy ſelf to be. Deſponding Soul, doth it become a man or woman travelling upon the road to that Heavenly City, and almoſt arrived there, within a few dayes Journie of his Fathers Houſe, where all his wants ſhall be ſupplied, to take on thus about a little Meat, drink or cloaths, which he fears he ſhall want by the way? it was a noble ſaying of the 40 *Martyrs*, famous in the *Eccleſiaſtical ſtory*, when turned out naked in a froſty night to be ſtarved to death; with theſe words they comforted one another θέμμυς ὁ χείμων, *&c.* the winter indeed is ſharp and cold, but Heaven is warm and comfortable! here we ſhiver for cold, but *Abrahams* boſome will make amends for all.

Object. 1. *But I may die for want.*

Sol. (1) Whoever did ſo? Where were the righteous forſaken? (2) If ſo, your journey is ended, and you fully ſupplied.

Obj. 2. *But I am not ſure of that, were*

I ſure of Heaven, it were another matter.

Sol. Are you not ſure of that? then you have other matters to trouble your ſelves about than theſe: Methinks, this ſhould be the leaſt of all your cares; I do not find that Souls perplexed and troubled about the want of Chriſt, pardon of ſin, *&c.* are uſually very anxious, or ſolicitous about theſe things. He that ſeriouſly puts ſuch queſtions as theſe: What ſhall I do to be ſaved? How ſhall I know my ſin is pardoned? Doth not uſually trouble himſelf with what ſhall I eat, What ſhall I drink; or wherewithal ſhall I be cloathed?

6. Conſid. *Doth it become the Children of ſuch a Father to diſtruſt his All-ſufficiency, or repine againſt any of his diſpenſations?*

Do you well to queſtion his care and love upon every new exigence; ſay, have you not been aſhamed of this formerly? hath not your Fathers ſeaſonable proviſions for you in former ſtraits, put you to the bluſh? and made you reſolve, never to queſtion his love and care any more, and yet will you renew your unworthy ſuſpitions of him again? Diſingenuous child, reaſon thus with thy ſelf, if I periſh for want of what is good

and needful for me, it must either be becauſe my Father knows not my wants, or hath not wherewith to ſupply them: or elſe regards not what becomes of me. Which of theſe ſhall I charge upon him? not the firſt, for *Mark* 6. 32. *My Father knows what I have need of*, my condition is not hid from him: Nor the ſecond, *for the earth is the Lords and the fulneſs of it*, Pſalm 24. 1. His name is *God All-ſufficient*, Gen. 17. 1. Not the laſt; *for, as a father pities his Children, ſo the Lord pities them that fear him*, Pſal. 103. 13. *The Lord is exceeding pitiful, and of tender mercie*, Jam. 5. 11. *He hears the young Ravens when they crie*, Job 38. 41. and will he not hear me? *Conſider* (ſaith Chriſt) *the fowls of the Air*, Mat. 6. 26. Not the fowls at the door, that are every day fed by hand, but the fowls of the air, that have none to provide for them. Doth he feed and cloath his enemies, and will he forget his Children? He heard the very cry of *Iſhmael* in diſtreſs, *Gen* 21. 17. O my unbelieving heart! Doſt thou yet doubt? Remember *Hagar* and the Child.

7. Conſid. *Your poverty is not your ſin, but your affliction only: if by ſinful means you have not brought it upon your ſelves; and*

if

if it be but an affliction, it may be born the eaſier for that.

'Tis hard indeed to bear an affliction coming upon us as the fruit and puniſhment of ſin; when men are under trouble upon that account, they uſe to ſay, O! if it were but a ſingle affliction coming from the hand of God, by way of tryal, I could bear it, but I have brought it upon my ſelf by ſin, it comes as the puniſhment of ſin; the marks of Gods diſpleaſure are upon it, 'tis the guilt within that troubles and galls, more than the want without.

But it is not ſo here, and therefore you have no reaſon to be caſt down under it.

Object. *But though there be no ſting of guilt, yet this condition wants not other ſtings: as firſt the diſcredit of Religion; I cannot comply with mine engagements in the world, and thereby religion is like to ſuffer.*

Sol. 'Tis well you have an heart to diſcharge every duty, yet if God diſable you by Providence, 'tis no diſcredit to your Profeſſion, becauſe you do not that which you cannot do, ſo long as it is your deſire, and endeavour to do what you can and ought to do, and in this caſe, Gods will is, that lenity and forbearance be exerciſed towards you, *Deut.* 24. 12, 13.

2. Object. *But it grieves me to behold the neceſſities of others whom I was wont to relieve and refreſh, but now cannot.*

Sol. If you cannot it ceaſes to be your dutie, and God accepts the drawing out of your ſoul to the hungry in compaſſion and deſire to help them, though you cannot draw forth a full purſe to relieve and ſupply them.

3. Obj. *But I find ſuch a condition full of temptation, a ſore clog in the way to Heaven.*

Sol. Every condition in the world, hath its clogs, and attending temptations; and were you in a proſperous condition, you might there meet with more temptations and fewer advantages than you now have: for though I confeſs poverty hath its temptations as well as proſperity, yet I am confident, proſperity hath not thoſe excellent advantages that poverty hath; for here you have an opportunity to diſcover the ſincerity of your love to God, when you can live upon him, find enough in him, and conſtantly follow him, even when all external inducements and motives fail. And thus I have ſhewed you how to keep your hearts from the temptations and dangers attending a poor and low condi-

tion

tion in the world, when want pinches, and the heart begins to ſink, then improve and bleſs God for theſe helps to keep it.

6. Seaſon. "The ſixth Seaſon of expreſſing this diligence in keeping the "heart, is the Seaſon of Duty; when "we draw nigh to God in publick, private, or ſecret Duties, then 'tis time to "look to the heart; for the vanity of the "heart ſeldom diſcovers it ſelf more "than at ſuch times. How oft doth the "poor ſoul crie out, O Lord how fain "would I ſerve thee, but vain thoughts "will not let me; I came to open my "heart to thee, to delight my ſoul in communion with thee, but my corruptions "have ſet upon me: Lord rate off theſe "vain thoughts, and ſuffer them not to "proſtitute the ſoul, which is eſpouſed to "thee, before thy face. The ſixth Caſe "then is this.

6. Caſe. *How the heart may be kept from diſtractions by vain thoughts, in the time of Duty.*

There is a twofold diſtraction, or wandring of the heart in duty: (1) Voluntary and habitual, *Pſal.* 78. 8. *They ſet not their hearts aright, and their ſpirit was not ſteadfaſt with God.* This is the caſe

of Formaliſts, and it proceeds from the want of an holy bent, and inclination of the heart to God; their hearts are under the power of their luſts, and therefore tis no wonder they go after their Luſts, even when they are about holy things, *Ezek.* 33. 3. (2) Involuntary and lamented diſtractions, *Rom.* 7. 21, 24. *I find then a Law, that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me, O wretched man that I am*, &c. This proceeds not from the want of a holy bent and aim, but from the weakneſs and imperfection of grace. And in this caſe the ſoul may make the like complaint againſt its own corruptions that *Abijah* did againſt *Jeroboam*, 2 Chr. 13. 6, 7. *Yet* Jeroboam *the Son of* Nebat *is riſen up againſt his Lord, when* Reho-boam *was young and tender hearted, and could not withſtand them, and there are gathered unto him vain men the Childrn of* Belial. Grace hath a dominion, but luſts are mutinous and ſeditious, during the infancy thereof. But it is not my buſineſs to ſhew you how theſe diſtractions come into the heart, but rather how to get, and keep them out of the heart; in order whereto, take theſe ten following Helps.

1. *Help.* Sequeſter your ſelves from all earthly imployments, and ſet apart ſome

ſome time for ſolemn preparation, to meet God in Duty: you cannot come reeking hot out of the world into Gods preſence, but you will find a tang of it in your duties; it is with the heart a few Minutes ſince plunged in the world, now at the feet of God, juſt as with the Sea after a ſtorm, which ſtill continues working, muddy, and diſquiet, though the wind be laid and ſtorm be over: thy heart muſt have ſome time to ſettle. There are few Muſicians that can take down a Lute or Viol, and play preſently upon it, without ſome time to tune it; there are few Chriſtians can preſently ſay, as *Pſal.* 57. 7. *O God, my heart is fixed, it is fixed.* O when thou goeſt to God in any duty, take thy heart aſide, and ſay, O my ſoul! I am now addreſſing my ſelf to the greateſt work that ever a creature was imployed about: I am going into the awful preſence of God about buſineſs of everlaſting moment.

Oh my Soul! leave trifling now, be compoſed, watchful, ſerious, this is no common work, 'tis God-work, Soul-work, Eternity-work; I am now going forth bearing Seed, which will bring forth fruit to life or death in the world to come; pau'e a while upon thy ſins, wants, troubles,

bles, keep thy thoughts a while in these before thou address thy self to Duty. *David first mused, and then spake with his tongue*, *Psal.* 39. 3, 4. So *Psal.* 45. 1. *My heart is enditing*, &c.

2. *Help.* Having composed thy heart by previous meditation, presently set a guard upon thy senses, how often are poor Christians in danger of losing the eyes of their mind by those of their body, for this *Job covenanted with his senses*, Chap. 31. 1. for this *David* prayed, *Ps.* 119.37. *turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way*: this may serve to expound that *mistical Arabian Proverb* which advises *to shut the windows, that the house may be light*: 'twere excellent if you could say in your on-sets upon duty, as an holy one once did, when he came off from duty, *Claudimini, oculi mei claudimini*, &c. *Be shut O my eyes be shut! for it is impossible you should ever see such beauty and glory in any Creature, as I have now seen in God.* You had need avoid all occasions of distraction from without, for be sure you will meet enough from within, intention of Spirit in the work of God locks up the eye and ear against vanity. When *Marcellus* entred the gates of *Syracuse*, *Archimedes*

was

was ſo intent about his Mathematical Scheam, that he took no notice of the Souldiers when they entred his very ſtudy with drawn Swords; a *fervent* cannot be a *vagrant* heart.

3. Help. *Beg of God a mortified fancy*, a working fancy (ſaith one) how much ſoever it be extolled among men, is a great ſnare to the ſoul; except it work in fellowſhip with right reaſon, and a ſanctified heart: the phantaſie is a power of the Soul placed between the ſenſes and the underſtanding, 'tis that which firſt ſtirs it ſelf in the ſoul, and by its motions the other powers are ſtirred, 'tis the common ſhop where thoughts are firſt forged and framed, and as this is, ſo are they; if imaginations be not firſt caſt down, 'tis impoſſible that every thought of the heart ſhould be brought into obedience to Chriſt, 2 *Cor.* 10. 5. this fancy is naturally the wildeſt and moſt untameable power in the ſoul. Some Chriſtians (*eſpecially* ſuch as are of hot and dry conſtitutions) have much to do with it.

And truly, the more ſpiritual the heart is, the more 'tis troubled about the vanity and wildneſs of it. O what a ſad thing it is! that thy nobler ſoul muſt lacky up and down after a vain roving fancy that

that ſuch a beggar ſhould on horſe-back, and ſuch a Prince run after it on foot; that it ſhould call off the ſoul from attendance upon God, when it is moſt ſweetly engaged in communion with him: to proſecute ſuch vanities as it will ſtart at ſuch times before it! beg earneſtly of God that the power of Sanctification may one come upon it. Some Chriſtians have attained ſuch a degree of Sanctification of their fancies, that they have had much ſweetneſs left upon their hearts by the ſpiritual workings of it in the night Seaſon: when thy fancy is more mortified, thy thoughts will be more orderly and fixed.

4. Help. *If thou wouldeſt keep thy heart from thoſe vain excurſions, realize to thy ſelf by faith, the holy and awful preſence of God in duties,*

If the preſence of a grave man will compoſe us to a ſerioufneſs, how much more the preſence of an holy God? thinkeſt thou, thy Soul durſt be ſo gariſh and light, if the ſenſe of a divine eye were upon it? remember the place where thou art, is the place of his feet, *Iſa.* 66. 13. Act Faith upon the *Omniſcience* of God. *All the Churches ſhall know that I am he that ſearcheth the heart, and tryeth*

tryeth the reins and will give to every one of you according to your works; Rev. 2. 23. *All things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do*, Heb. 4. 12. realize his infinite *holineſs*; into what a ſerious compoſed frame did the ſight of God in his holineſs put the Spirit of the Prophet, *Iſa.* 6. 5. labour to get alſo upon thy heart due apprehenſions of the greatneſs of God, ſuch as *Abraham* had, *Gen.* 18. 27. *I that am but duſt and aſhes, have taken upon me to ſpeak to God*: And laſtly, remember the *jealouſie* of God, how tender he is over his worſhip, *Lev.* 10. 3. *And Moſes ſaid unto* Aaron, *this is that the Lord ſpake, ſaying, I will be ſanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.*

A man that is praying, (ſaith *Bernard*) *ſhould behave himſelf as if he were entring into the Court of Heaven, where he ſees the Lord upon his Throne, ſurrounded with ten thouſands of his Angels, and Saints miniſtring unto him.* When thou comeſt from a duty, in which the heart hath been toyling and wandring, thou mayſt ſay, verily God was in this place, and I knew it not. Suppoſe all the impertinencies and vanities which have paſt through thine heart in a duty were written out,

and

and enterlined with thy petitions, couldst thou have the face to present it to God? should thy tongue but utter all the thoughts of thy heart in prayer, would not men abhor thee? why, thy thoughts are vocal to God, *Psal.* 139. 2. If thou wert petitioning the King for thy life, would it not provoke him to see thee playing with thy hand-strings, or catching every flie that lights upon thy cloaths, whiles thou art speaking to him about such serious matters? O think sadly upon that Scripture, *Psal.* 87. 7. *God is Greatly to be feared in the Assemblies of his Saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are round about him.* Why did God descend in thundrings and lightnings, and dark clouds upon *Sinai*, *Exod.* 19. 16, 18. Why did the Mountains smoak under him? the people quake and tremble round about him, yea *Moses* himself not exempted; but to teach the people that great truth, *Heb.* 12. 28, 29. *Let us have grace, whereby we may serve him acceptably with reverence and Godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire:* present God thus before thee, and thy vain heart will quickly be reduced to a more serious frame.

5. Help. *Maintain a praying frame of heart in the intervals of duty*: What is the reason

reaſon our hearts are ſo dull, careleſs and wandring, when we come to hear or pray, but becauſe there have been ſuch long intermiſſions in our communion with God; by reaſon whereof the heart is out of a praying frame: if that ſpiritual warmth, thoſe holy impreſſions we carry from God in one duty, were but preſerved to kindle another duty, it would be of marvellous advantage to keep the heart intent, and ſerious with God.

To this purpoſe thoſe intermediate ejaculations, betwixt ſtated and ſolemn duties, are of moſt ſweet and excellent uſe; by theſe, one duty is as it were linked to another, and ſo the ſoul as it were wraps up it ſelf in a chain of duties. That Chriſtian ſeldom miſſes his mark in ſolemn duty, that ſhoots up many of theſe darts in the interval of duty, 'tis an excellent commendation Chriſt beſtows upon the Spouſe, *Cant.* 4. 11. *Thy lips O my Spouſe drop as the honey Comb*: upon which Text one gives this ſweet note, the honey Comb drops actually but ſometimes, but it always hangs full of ſweet drops ready to fall: if our ejaculations were more, our lamentations upon this account would be fewer.

6. Help

6. Help. *Endeavour to ingage and raiſe thy affections to God in duty if thou wouldeſt have thy diſtractions cured.*

A dropping eye and a melting heart, are ſeldom troubled as others upon this account: when the ſoul is intent about any work, it gathers in its ſtrength, and bends all the thoughts about it; and when it is deeply affected, it will be intent; the affections command the thoughts to go after them, deadneſs cauſes diſtraction, and diſtraction increaſes deadneſs; could you but look upon duties as the Galleries of communion in which you walk with God, where your Souls may be filled with thoſe raviſhing, and matchleſs delights that are in his preſence, your Soul would not offer to ſtir from thence.

It is with the heart in duty, as it is with thoſe that dig for Gold Oar; they try here, and finding none, try there; and ſo go from place to place, till at laſt they hit upon the rich Vein, and there they ſit down. If thy heart could but once hit the rich Vein in duty, it would dwell and abide there with delight and conſtancy. *O how I love thy Law, it is my Meditation day and night! Pſal.* 119. 97. The Soul could dwell day

day and night upon its knees, when once its Delights, Loves, and Desires, are ingaged. What's the reason your hearts are so shuffling, especially in secret duties? Why are you ready to be gone almost as soon as you are come into the presence of God? but because your affections are not ingaged.

7. Help. *Mourn over the matter to God, and call in assistance from Heaven; when vain thoughts assault thy heart in Duty.*

When the Messenger of Satan buffeted *Paul* by wicked injections, as is supposed, he goes to God, and mourns over it before him, 2 *Cor.* 12. 8. Never slight wandring thoughts in duty as small matters; follow every vain thought with a deep sigh, turn thee to God with such words as these; Lord I came hither to speak with thee, and here a busie Devil, and a vain heart conspiring together, have set upon me. O my God; what an heart have I? shall I never wait upon thee without distraction! when shall I enjoy an hour of free Communion with thee? help me my God this once, do but display thy glory before mine eyes; and my heart shall quickly be recovered: Thou knowest I came hither to enjoy thee, and shall I go away without thee!

See, how the heart of the poor Child works towards thee! ſtrives to get near thee but cannot: my heart is aground, *come thou North wind, blow South wind,* O for a freſh gale now from thy Spirit, to ſet my affections afloat! couldſt thou but thus affectionately bewail thy diſtractions to God, thou mighteſt obtain help and deliverance from them: He would ſay to Satan, and thine imperious Luſts as *Ahaſhuerus* ſaid of *Haman*, what will he force the Queen before my face; Who are theſe, that ſet upon my Child in my Work, and preſence?

8. Help. *Look upon the ſucceſs and ſweetneſs of thy duties, as very much depending upon the keeping of thy heart, cloſe with God in them.*

Theſe two things, the ſucceſs, and ſweetneſs of duty, are as dear to a Chriſtian as his two eyes, and both of theſe muſt neceſſarily be loſt, if the heart be loſt in duty, *Job.* 35. 13. *Surely God heareth not vanity, neither doth the Almighty regard it*: the Promiſe is made to an heart engaged, *Jer.* 29. 13. *then ſhall you ſeek me, and find me, when ye ſhall ſearch for me with all your heart.* Well then, when thou findeſt thy heart under the power of deadneſs and diſtraction, ſay to thy Soul,

Soul, O what do I loſe by a careleſs heart now! my praying times are the choiceſt parts, the Golden ſpots of all my time: could I but get up this heart with God, I might now obtain ſuch mercies as would be matter for a ſong to all eternity.

9. Help. *Look upon it as a great diſcovery of the ſincerity, or hypocriſie of your hearts according as you find them, careful, or careleſs in this matter.*

Nothing will ſtartle an upright heart more than this: What, ſhall I give way to a cuſtomary wandring of heart from God? ſhall the ſpot of the hypocrite appear upon my Soul? they indeed can drudge on in the round of duty, never regarding the frames of their hearts, *Ezek.* 33. 31, 32. but ſhall I do ſo? when men come into the preſence Chamber, and the King is not there; they bow to the empty Chair. O never let me be ſatisfied with empty duties! never let me take my leave of a duty, *untill mine eyes have ſeen the King, the Lord of Hoſts.*

10. Help. *Laſtly, it will be of ſpecial uſe to keep thy heart with God in duties, to conſider what influence all thy duties have into thine eternity.*

Theſe are your ſeed times, and what

you ſow in your duties in this world you muſt look to reap the fruit of it in another World, *Gal.* 6.7,8. if you ſow to the fleſh, of that you ſhall reap corruption: but if to the ſpirit, life everlaſting: O my Soul, anſwer ſeriouſly; wouldſt thou be willing to reap the fruit of vanity, in the World to come? dareſt thou ſay, when thy thoughts are roving to the ends of the Earth in Duty, when thou ſcarce mindeſt what thou ſayeſt or heareſt, now Lord, I am ſowing to the Spirit, now I am providing and laying up for eternity, now I am ſeeking for Glory, Honor, and immortality, now I am ſtriving to enter in at the ſtrait Gate, now I am taking the Kingdom of Heaven by an holy violence? O ſuch a conſideration as this, ſhould make the multitudes of vain thoughts that preſs in upon thy heart in duty, to fly ſeven wayes before it: and thus I have ſhewn you, how to keep your hearts, in the times of duty.

7. *Seaſon.* "The ſeventh ſeaſon call-
"ing for more than common diligence
"to keep the heart is, when we receive
"injuries and abuſes from men, ſuch is
"the depravedneſs and corruption of
"man in his collapſed ſtate, that *nemo*
"*homini*

" *homini lupus*, one man is become a Wolf,
" a Tyger to another: they are as the
" Prophet complains, *Hab.* 1. 14. *As the*
" *fiſhes of the Sea, and as the creeping things*
" *that have no Ruler over them*, and as wick-
" ed men are cruel and oppreſſive one
" to another, ſo they conſpire together
" to abuſe and wrong the people of God,
" as the ſame Prophet complains, *ver.* 13.
" *the wicked devoureth the man that is more*
" *righteous than he.* Now when we are
" thus abuſed and wronged, tis hard to
" keep the heart from revengeful moti-
" ons: to make it meekly and quietly to
" commit the cauſe to him that judgeth
" righteouſly, to exerciſe no other affe-
" ction but pity towards them that abuſe
" us. Surely the Spirit that is in us luſt-
" eth to revenge, but it muſt not be ſo:
" you have choice helps in the Goſpel to
" keep down your hearts from ſuch ſin-
" ful motions againſt your enemies, and
" to ſweeten your imbittered Spirits. The
" ſeventh caſe therefore ſhall be this.

7. Caſe. *How a Chriſtian may keep his heart from revengeful motions, under the greateſt injuries and abuſes from men?*

The Goſpel indeed allows a liberty to vindicate our innocency, and aſſert our rights; but not to vent our corruptions,

and invade Gods right, when therefore thou findeſt thy heart begin to be inflamed by revengefull motions, preſently apply the following remedies; and the firſt is this.

1. Remedy. *Urge upon thy heart the ſevere prohibitions of revenge by the Law of God.* Remember that this is forbidden fruit, how pleaſing and luſcious ſoever it be to our vitiated appetites: Oh ſaith nature, revenge is ſweet; Oh but ſaith God, the effects thereof ſhall be bitter: how plainly hath God interdicted this fleſh-pleaſing ſin, *Prov.* 29. 22. *Say not, I will recompence evil.* Pr. 24. 29. *Say not, I will do ſo to him as he hath done to me.* Rom. 12. 17. *Recompence to no man evil for evil,* and v. 19. *Avenge not your ſelves but rather give place to wrath*: Nay that's not all, but *Prov.* 25. 21. *If thine enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirſt, give him drink.* The word feed him, as *Criticks* obſerve, ſignifies to feed chearfully and tenderly, as birds do their young ones: The Scripture is a great friend to the peace and tranquility of humane Societies, which can never be preſerved if revenge be not depoſed; it was wont to be an argument urged by the Chriſtians to prove their Religion to be ſupernatural and

and pure, that it forbids revenge which is ſo ſweet to Nature; and verily 'tis a thouſand pities ſuch an argument ſhould be loſt. Well then awe your hearts with the authority of God in theſe Scriptures: and when carnal reaſon ſaith, mine enemy deſerves to be hated, let Conſcience reply, but doth God deſerve to be diſobeyed? thus, and thus he hath done, and ſo he hath wronged me; but what hath God done that I ſhould wrong him? if he dare be ſo bold to break the peace, ſhall I be ſo wicked to break the *Precept*? if he fears not to wrong me; ſhall not I fear to wrong God? O let the fear of Gods threatnings repreſs ſuch ſinful motions.

2. Remed. *Set before your eyes the moſt eminent patterns of meekneſs and forgiveneſs, that your ſouls may fall in love with it.*

This is the way to cut off thoſe common pleas of the Fleſh for revenge: as thus, no man would bear ſuch an affront; Yes, ſuch and ſuch have born as bad and worſe. I ſhall be reckoned a coward; a fool, if I paſs by this: no matter, as long as I follow the examples of the wiſeſt, and holieſt of men: Never did any ſuffer more and greater abuſes from men, than Chriſt did, and never did any carry it

more peaceably and forgivingly, Isa. 53.7. *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a Lamb to the slaughter* &c. This pattern the Apostle sets before you for your imitation, 1 Pet. 2. 21, 22, 23. *For even hereunto are you called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps: Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatned not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.* To be of a meek forgiving Spirit is Christ-like, God-like, *then shall you be the children of your Father which is in Heaven, for he maketh his Son to rise upon the Evil, and upon the good, and sendeth Rain on the just, and on the unjust*, Mat. 5. 45. How eminently also did this Spirit of Christ rest upon his Apostles; never were there such men upon Earth for true excellency of Sprit. None were ever abused more, or suffered their abuses better: *Being reviled (say they) we bless, being persecuted, we suffer it, being defamed, we intreat*, 1 Cor. 4. 12, 13. Mr. *Calvin* though a man of a quick spirit, yet had attained such a degree of this Christ-like forgiveness, that when *Luther* had used some oprobrious language of him, the good man said no more but this

this; although he ſhould call me a Devil, yet I will acknowledge him to be an eminent Servant of Jeſus Chriſt.

I have often heard it reported of Holy Mr. *Dod*, that when one, enraged at his cloſe convincing Doctrine, pick't a quarrel with him, ſmote him on the face, and daſhed out two of his teeth, this meek ſervant of Chriſt ſpat out the teeth, and bloud into his hand, and ſaid, ſee here, you have knockt out two of my teeth, and that without any juſt provocation; but on condition I might do your ſoul good, I would give you leave to daſh out all the reſt; here is the excellency of a Chriſtians ſpirit, above all the attainments of Moral Heathens: though they were excellent at many other things, yet they could never attain this forgiving Spirit: it is the firſt office of juſtice (ſaid *Tully*) to hurt no body, unleſs firſt provoked by an injury, whereupon *Lactantius*, *O quam ſimplicem veramque ſententiam duorum verborum, adjectione corrupit!* What a dainty ſentence ſpoiled the Orator by adding thoſe two laſt words! ſtrive then for this excellency of Spirit, which is the proper excellency of Chriſtians, do ſome ſingular thing that others cannot do, and then you will have a teſti-

teſtimony in their conſciences: When *Moſes* out-did the *Magicians*, they were forced to confeſs the finger of God in that buſineſs.

3. Remedy. *Conſider well the qualitie of the perſon that hath wronged thee*; either he is a good man or a wicked man that hath done thee the injury: if he be a good man, there is a light and tenderneſs in his Conſcience, and that will bring him at laſt to a ſenſe of the evil he hath done; however Chriſt hath forgiven him greater injuries than theſe, and why ſhouldeſt not thou? will not Chriſt upbraid him, with any of thoſe wrongs done to him, but frankly forgive him all? and wilt thou take him by the throat for ſome petty abuſe that he hath doth to thee?

Or is he a wicked man? if ſo, truly you had more need to exerciſe pity than revenge towards him, and that upon a double account: for 1. he is beſide himſelf, ſo indeed is every unconverted ſinner, *Luke* 15. 17. ſhould you go into *Bedlam* and there hear one rail at you, another mock you, and a third threaten you, would you ſay I would be revenged upon them? no, you would rather go away pitying them. Alaſs poor creatures they are out of their Wits, and know not what they

they do. Beſides, (2) there is a day coming, if they repent not, when they will have more miſery than you can find in your hearts to wiſh them: you need not ſtudy revenge; Gods vengeance ſleepeth not, and will ſhortly take place upon them, and is not that enough? have they not an eternity of miſery coming? if they repent not, this muſt be the portion of their cup, and if ever they do repent, they will be ready to make you reparation.

4. Rem. *Keep down thy heart by this conſideration, that by revenge thou canſt but ſatisfie a luſt, but by forgiveneſs thou ſhalt conquer a luſt.*

Suppoſe, by revenge thou ſhouldeſt deſtroy one enemy, I will ſhew thee how by forgiving thou ſhalt conquer three; thine own luſts, the devils temptations, and thine enemies heart: and is not this a more glorious conqueſt? if by revenge thou overcome thine enemy, yet (as *Bernard* ſaith) *infelix victoria ubi ſuperans virum, ſuccumbit vitio*: unhappy victory, when by overcoming another man, thou art overcome by thine own corruption; but this way you may obtain a glorious conqueſt indeed. What an honourable and dry victory did *David* this

way

way obtain over *Saul*, 1 Sam. 24. 16, 17. *And it came to pass when* David *had made an end of speaking these words, that* Saul *lift up his voice and wept; and he said to* David, *thou art more righteous than I.*

It must be a very dis-ingenious nature indeed, upon which meekness and forgiveness will not work, a stony heart which this fire will not melt; to this sense is that, *Prov.* 25. 21. *if thine enemy hunger feed him, if he thirst, give him drink, for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head.* Some will have it a sin-punishing fire, but others an heart-melting fire; to be sure, it will either melt his heart, or aggravate his misery. *Augustin* thinks that *Steven*'s prayer for his enemies, was the great means of *Paul*'s Conversion.

5. Rem. *Seriously propound this question to thy own heart, have I got any good by the wrong and injuries received, or have I not?* If they have done you no good, turn the revenge upon your selves. O that I should have such a bad heart, that can get no good out of such trouble, O that my Spirit should be so unlike to Christs! the patience and meekness of other Christians have turned all the injuries thrown at them into precious stones; the spirits of others have been raised in blessing

God

God when they have been loaded with reproaches by the world, they have bound them as an Ornament to their necks. *Superbus fio* (ſaid *Luther*) *quod video nomen peſſimum mibi creſcere.* I could even be proud upon it, that I have a bad name among wicked men: to the ſame purpoſe *Jerome* ſweetly, *Gratias ago Deo meo quod dignus ſum quem mundus oderit.* I thank my God, that I am worthy to be hated of the World: Thus their hearts were provoked by injuries to magnifie God, and bleſs him for them: if it work contrary with me I have cauſe enough to be filled with ſelf-diſplacency.

If you have got any good by them, if the reproaches and wrongs you have received, have made you ſearch your hearts the more, watch your ways the more narrowly; if their wronging you have made you ſee how you have wronged God, then let me ſay for them as *Paul* did for himſelf, pray forgive them this wrong.

What can you not find an heart to forgive one that hath been inſtrumental of ſo much good to you, that's ſtrange! what though they meant it for evil, yet if God have turned it to good; you have no more reaſon to rage againſt the inſtrument

ſtrument, than he had, who received a wound from his enemy which only brake and let out that impoſthume, which otherwiſe had been his death.

6. Rem. *'Tis of excellent uſe to keep the heart from revenge, to look up and eye the firſt cauſe by which all our troubles are ordered.*

This will calm and meeken our Spirits quickly; never did a wicked tongue try the patience of a Saint, more than *David*'s was tryed by that railing *Shimei*: yet the Spirit of this good man was not at all poiſoned with revenge, though he goes along curſing and caſting ſtones at him all the way; yea, though *Abiſhai* offered *David*, if he pleaſed, the head of that enemy; but the King ſaid, *What have I to do with you ye Sons of* Zerviah? *So let him curſe becauſe the Lord hath ſaid unto him, curſe* David; *Who ſhall then ſay wherefore haſt thou done ſo?* It may be God uſes him as his Rod to laſh me becauſe I by my ſin made his enemies to blaſpheme him: and ſhall I be angry with the Rod? how irrational were that? This alſo was it that quieted *Job*, he doth not rail and vow revenge upon the *Caldeans* and *Sabeans*, but eyes God as the orderer of thoſe troubles, and is quiet. *The Lord hath*

taken

taken away, bleſſed be his name, Job 1.21.

Object. But you will ſay, *To turn aſide the right of a man to ſubvert a man in his cauſe, the Lord approveth not,* Lam. 3.36.

Anſw. True, but though it fall not under his approving, yet it doth under his permitting will, and there is a great argument for quiet ſubmiſſion in that: nay, he hath not only the permitting, but the ordering of all thoſe troubles: did we ſee more of an holy God, we ſhould ſhew leſs of a corrupt nature in ſuch trials.

7. Rem. *Conſider how you daily wrong God, and you will not be ſo eaſily enflamed with revenge againſt others that have wronged you.*

You are daily grieving and wronging God, and yet he bears, forgives, and will not take vengeance upon you, and will you be ſo quick in avenging your ſelves upon others? O what a ſharp and terrible rebuke is that, *Mat.* 18. 32, 33. *Oh thou wicked, and ſloathful ſervant; I forgave thee all that debt becauſe thou deſiredſt me, ſhouldſt not thou alſo have had compaſſion on thy fellow Servant, even as I had pitie upon thee?* None ſhould be filled with bowels of pity, forbearance, and mercy, to ſuch

as

as wrong them, as thoſe ſhould be that have experienced the riches of mercy themſelves: methinks the Mercy of God to us ſhould melt our very bowels into Mercy over others: 'Tis impoſſible we can be cruel to others, except we forget how kind Chriſt hath been to us: thoſe that have found Mercy ſhould ſhew Mercy: if kindneſs cannot work, methinks fear ſhould; *if ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive you your treſpaſſes*, Mat. 6 15.

8. Rem. *Laſtly, Let the conſideration of the day of the Lord which draweth nigh, withhold your hearts from anticipating it by acts of revenge.*

Why are you ſo quick? is not the Lord at hand, to avenge all his abuſed ſervants? *Be patient therefore my Brethren unto the coming of the Lord: behold the Husbandman waiteth, &c. Be ye alſo patient, for the coming of the Lord draws nigh: grudge not one againſt another, Brethren, leſt you be condemned. Behold the Judge ſtandeth at the door*, Jam. 5. 7, 8, 9. This Text affords three arguments againſt revenge (1) The Lords near-approach. (2) The example of the Husbandmans patience. (3) The danger we draw upon our ſelves by anticipating Gods judgement, vengeance is

mine

mine, saith the Lord, he will distribute justice more equally and impartially, than you can: They that believe they have a God to right them, will not so much wrong themselves, as to avenge their own wrongs.

1. Obj. *But flesh and blood is not able to bear such abuses.*

Sol. If you resolve to consult flesh and blood in such cases, and do no more but what that will enable you to do; never pretend to Religion. Christians must do singular and supernatural things.

2. Obj. *But if I pack up such abuses, I shall be reckoned a fool, and every one will trample upon me.*

Sol. 1. You may be reckoned so among fools, but God and good men will account it your wisdom, and the excellency of your spirits.

2. It must be a base spirit indeed, that will trample upon a meek and forgiving Christian. And thus learn to keep your hearts from revenge, under all provocations.

8. *Seas.* "The next season in which "we are in danger of losing our hearts, "is, when we meet with great crosses "and provocations: Then sinful passion "is apt to transport the heart, 'tis the

" fault of many good men, to be of hasty " and quick Spirits, when provoked; " though they dare not concoct anger " into malice, for that would be a note " of *wickedness*; yet are they very incident " to sudden anger, which is a " sign of *weakness*. *Beza* in " the life of *Calvin* observes " that he was of a keen and " hasty Spirit: and he that " writes the life of Great " *Cameron*, saith, That his " anger was soon stirred to- " wards his near and familiar friends, but " then he would easily oppose it, and ac- " knowledge his weakness: Alas, when " provocations and tryals of our patience " come, we know not what spirits we " are of. The eighth case therefore is this.

Beza in Vit. Cal. p. 109.

Icon Cameronis.

8. Case. *How the heart may be kept meek and patient under great crosses and provocations.*

There are three sorts of anger, natural, holy, and sinful anger. (1) Natural, which is nothing else but the motion of the irascible appetite towards an offensive object; and this in it self is no sin, they are propassions rather than passions; the infelicities, rather than the sins of nature, as *Jerome* calls them: Reason (saith *Plutarch*)

tarch) is the *Driver*, the Soul is the *Chariot*, and the two Horſes that draw it on in all its motions, are the concupiſcible and irraſcible appetites; whilſt theſe are rightly managed by Reaſon, they are not only lawful, but very uſeful to the Soul. God would not have us to be ſtupid and inſenſate, though he would have us to be meek and patient. In *Epheſ.* 4. 26. he allows the natural motion, but forbids the ſinful exorbitancy. (2) Holy anger which is a pure flame, kindled by an Heavenly ſpark of love to God, and in Scripture is called *Zeal*, which is (as one ſaith) the Dagger which Love draws in Gods quarrel. Such was *Lots* againſt the *Sodomites*, and that of *Moſes* againſt the Idolatrous *Iſraelites*. When *Servetus* condemned *Zwinglius* for his raſhneſs, his anſwer was, *In aliis manſuetus ero, in blaſphemiis in Chriſtum, non ita*; in other caſes I will be mild, but in the cauſe of Chriſt not ſo. That which the World calls Moderation and Mildneſs here, is in Gods account ſtupidity and cowardlineſs, neither of theſe are that which I am now perſwading you to keep your hearts againſt. But (3) there is ſinful paſſion. that is the thing which endangers you. Now anger becomes ſinful when

'tis either *Cauſeleſs*, Mat. 5. 22. *or exceſſive*, and that either in meaſure or time, exceeding the value of the impulſive cauſe, be it more tranſient or abiding, yet it is a ſin, and is matter of humiliation before God. Now the means to keep the heart from it under provocations are theſe.

Means. 1. *Get low and humble thoughts of your ſelves, and then you will have meek ſpirits, and peaceable deportments towards others.*

The humble is ever the patient man, pride is the root of paſſion, a lofty, will be a ſurly ſpirit: Bladders blown up with wind, will not lie cloſe together: But prick them, and you may pack a thouſand in a ſmall room, *only by pride cometh contention*, Prov. 13. 10. When we over-rate our ſelves, then we think we are unworthily treated by others, and that provokes; and here (by the way) take notice of one great benefit of acquaintance with your own hearts, even the meekning and calming of our Spirits. Chriſtian, methinks thou ſhouldeſt know ſo much by thy ſelf, that 'tis impoſſible any ſhould lay thee lower, or have baſer thoughts of thee than thou haſt of thy ſelf. Some render the original of that

Text,

Text, *Hab.* 2. 5. *Thus the proud man is as he that transgresseth by wine,* and drunkards you know are quarrelsome: O get more humility, and that will bring you more Peace.

Means. 2. *Be often sweetning your spirit, in communion with God, and they will not easily be imbittered with wrath towards men.*

A quiet *Conscience* never produced an unquiet *Conversation*: The peace of God doth βραβεύειν rule in the heart, as an Umpire in appeasing strifes, for so much that word, *Col.* 3. 15. imports; wrath and strife are hugely opposite to the frame and temper of a spiritual heart, because inconsistent with the delight and contentment of that Dove-like Spirit, which loves a sedate and quiet Brest. O saith a Soul, that feeds upon the sweet Communion of the Spirit, shall the sparkles of provocations now catch in my passions, and raise such a smoak in my soul as will offend and drive away the Comforter from me? This is so effectual a remedy against passion, that I durst almost venture in a Christian of an hasty nature to make long-suffering a sign of Communion with God. Seest thou such a Christian quiet and calm under pro-

provocations, 'tis very like his Soul feeds upon such sweetness in God as he is loath to leave; and on the other side, seest thou a Christian turbulent and clamorous, doubtless all is not well within: His spirit is like a bone out of joynt, which cannot move without pain and trouble.

3. Mea. *Get due apprehensions of the evil nature and effects of sinful anger.* *Ira, furor brevis, anger is a short madness* (saith one) *Ira animæ febris* (saith another) Anger is the Feaver of the Soul. 'Tis the *interregnum* and eclipse of Reason, saith a third.

The effects of it also are very sad. (1) *It grieves the Spirit of God*, Eph. 4. 30. Banishes him from that breast in which it rages and tumultuates. God is the God of Peace; the presence and comforts of God are only enjoyed in a calm: 'Tis a golden note one gives upon the forecited Text. God doth not usually bless with Peace of Conscience, such as make no Conscience of Peace. (2) It gives advantages to the Devil, *Eph.* 4. 26, 27. Satan is an angry and discontented Spirit, and finds no rest, but in restless hearts: He lives like the *Salamander* in Fires of Contention, he bestirs himself when the Spirits are in a commotion, sometimes he fills

fills the heart with revengeful thoughts, ſometimes he fills the lips, and inflames the tongue with undecent language; even a meek *Moſes* ſometimes ſpake unadviſedly with his lips. (3) It diſtunes the Spirit for duty, upon this account the Apoſtle diſſwades Husbands and Wives from jarring carriages and contentions, that their Prayers be not hindred, 1 *Pet.* 3. 7. All acts of worſhip muſt be ſuitable to the object of worſhip; but God is the God of Peace, the God of Love. (4) To mention no more, it diſparages the Chriſtian Religion. How would *Plato* and *Pythagoras* ſhame us, if they were now living. Chriſt was as a Lamb for meekneſs, and doth it become his followers to be like Lions? O keep your hearts, or you will at once loſe, not only your own Peace, but the credit of Religion.

Mea. 4. *Conſider how ſweet a thing it is to a Chriſtian to conquer his Corruptions, and carry away the ſpoyls of them.*

He that is ſlow to anger, is better than the mighty, and that ruleth his ſpirit, than he that taketh a City, Prov. 16. 32. Is there any content in venting a paſſion? How much more in mortifying it? When thou comeſt in a calm mood, or upon a death-bed to review thy life, how com-

fortable then will it be to reflect upon the conquests thou hast got by the fear of God over the evil propensions of thine own heart! 'twas a memorable saying of *Valentinian* the Emperour, when he came to die: Among all my Conquests (said he) there is but one that now comforts me; and being asked what that was, he answered, I have overcome my worst enemy, mine own naughty heart.

Means. 5. *Shame your selves by setting before you, those eminent patterns that have been most excellent for meekness.*

Above all, compare your spirits with the Spirit of Christ, *Learn of me* (saith he) *for I am meek and lowly*, Matth. 11. 29. Christ was meek and lowly, but I am proud and passionate. It was the high commendation of *Moses*, Numb. 12. 3. *Now the man* Moses *was meek above all the men of the earth; and this was the man that knew God face to face.* 'Tis said of *Calvin* and *Ursin*, that they both were of cholerick natures, but yet had so learned the meekness of Christ, as not to utter one word under the greatest provocation unbeseeming Religion. When I read the pretty stories of the very Heathens, that never had the advantages we have, how the *Pythagorians*, whatever feuds had been

been among them in the day, would hush all, by sending to each other this message, *The Sun is almost set*; and that of *Plato* to his Scholar, *I would beat thee, if I were not angry.*

When I read what lenity and tenderness *Lycurgus* shewed to an insolent fellow that had struck out one of his eyes; I am ashamed to see how much Christians are out-shot by Heathens, who by meer moral Arguments and Precepts, had thus meekned their spirits, and conquered their passions. The dim light of Nature could teach *Seneca* to say, that anger will hurt a man more than the offence; for there is a certain bound in the offence, but I know not how far mine anger will carry me. 'Tis a shame that these men who come so far behind us in means and advantages, should so far out-strip us in meekness and patience.

Means. 6. Lastly. *Avoid all irritating occasions.*

He that will not hear the Clapper, must not pull the Rope. Grievous words stir up anger (saith *Solomon*) *Prov.* 15. 1. Do not only pray, and resolve against it, but get as far as you can out of the way of it; 'tis true spiritual Valour to run as fast, and as far as we can out of

sins

ſins way: if you can but avoid anger in its firſt riſe, there is no great fear of it afterwards; for it is not with this ſin, as it is with other ſins; other ſins grow to their full ſtrength by degrees, their firſt motions are the weakeſt, but this ſin is born in its full ſtrength, it is ſtrongeſt at firſt, withſtand it then, and it falls before you. Thus learn to keep your hearts when provocations ariſe.

9. *Seaſon.* The ninth Seaſon of exerting our greateſt diligence, "Is the Cri-"tical hour of temptation, wherein Sa-"tan laies cloſe ſiege to the Fort-Royal "of a Chriſtians heart, and often ſur-"priſes it for want of watchfulneſs. To "keep thy heart now, is no leſs a Mercy "than a duty; few Chriſtians are ſo well "skilled in detecting the fallacies, and re-"torting the Arguments by which Satan "uſes to draw them to ſin, as to come off "ſafe in thoſe encounters. *Watch and* "*pray* (ſaith our Lord) *leſt ye enter into* "*temptation*, *Mark* 14. 38. Even an emi-"nent *David*, and a wiſe *Solomon*, have "ſmarted for their careleſneſs at ſuch a "time as this. The ninth Caſe therefore "ſhall be this.

9. Caſe. *How a Chriſtian, when ſtrongly ſollicited by the Devil to ſin, may keep his heart*

heart from yielding to the temptation?

Now there are six special Arguments, by which Satan subtilly insinuates and winds in the temptation; in all which, I shall offer thee some help for the keeping of thy heart, and the first is this.

Arg. 1. The first Argument is drawn from the pleasure of sin: O (saith Satan) here is pleasure to be enjoyed; temptation comes with a smiling countenance, and charming voice: What, art thou so flegmatick and dull a soul, as not to feel the powerful charms of pleasure? Who can withhold himself from such delights?

Now thine heart may be kept from the danger of this temptation, by retorting this Argument of pleasure upon the tempter; which is done two ways.

1. Thou telleſt me Satan, that sin is pleasant; be it so: But are the gripes of Conscience, and the flames of Hell so too? Is it pleasant to feel the wounds and throbs of Conscience? If so, Why did *Peter* weep so bitterly, *Mat.* 26. 75. Why did *David* cry out of broken bones, *Psal.* 51. I hear what thou sayeſt of the pleasure of sin, and I have read what *David* hath said of the terrible effects of sin in his *Psalm*, to bring to remem-

membrance, *Psal.* 38. *verse* 2. *Thine Arrows stick fast in me, and thy Hand presseth me sore.* Verse 3. *There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin.* Verse 4. *For mine iniquities are gone over mine head as an heavie burthen; they are too heavy for me.* Vers. 5. *My wounds stink and are corrupt, because of my foolishness.* Vers. 6. *I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long.* Vers. 7. *My loyns are filled with a loathsome disease, and there is no soundness in my flesh.* Vers. 8. *I am feeble and sore broken, I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.*

Here I see the true face of sin, if I yield to thy temptation, I must either feel these pangs of Conscience, or the flames of Hell.

2. What talkest thou of the pleasure of sin, when by experience I know there is more true pleasure in the mortification, than can be in the commission of sin. O how sweet is it to please God, to obey Conscience, to preserve inward Peace, to be able say, in this tryal I have discovered the sincerity of my heart; now I know I fear the Lord, now I see that I truly hate sin. Hath sin any such

ſuch delight as this? This will choak that temptation.

Arg. 2. The ſecond argument is drawn from the ſecrecy of ſin. O (ſaith Satan) this ſin will never diſgrace thee abroad; none ſhall know it.

This Argument may be retorted, and the heart ſecured thus: thou ſayeſt, none ſhall know it; but Satan, canſt thou find a place void of the Divine Preſence for me to ſin in? Thus *Job* ſecured his heart from this temptation, *Job* 31. 4. *Doth he not ſee my wayes, and count all my ſteps?* Therefore he makes a Covenant with his eyes, *verſ.* 1. After the ſame manner *Solomon* teaches us to retort this temptation, *Prov.* 5. 20, 21. *And why, my ſon, wilt thou be raviſhed with a ſtrange woman, and embrace the boſome of a ſtranger? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.* What if I hide it from the eyes of all the world for the preſent, I cannot hide it from God; and the time is at hand, when all the World ſhall know it too; for the World aſſures me, *Luke* 8. 17. *That what is done now in ſecret, ſhall be proclaimed as upon the houſe top.* Beſides, is not my Conſcience as a thouſand witneſſes? Do I ow no reverence to my ſelf? Could the Heathen

man

many ſay, *Turpe quid auſurus, te ſine teſte time*, when thou art tempted to commit ſin, fear thy ſelf without any other witneſs; and ſhall not I be afraid to ſin, before mine own Conſcience, which always hath a reproof in its mouth, or a pen in its hand, to record my moſt ſecret actions?

Arg. 3. The third Argument by which Satan tempteth to ſin, is taken from the gain and profit ariſing out of it: Why ſo nice and ſcrupulous? 'tis but ſtretch Conſcience a little, and thou maiſt make thy ſelf: Now is thy opportunity.

The heart may be kept from falling into this dangerous ſnare, by retorting the temptation thus: But what profit will it be if a man ſhould gain the whole World, and loſe his own ſoul? Or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his Soul? *Matth.* 16. 26. O my Soul, my precious Soul! ſhall I hazard thee for all the good that is in this World? There is an Immortal Spirit dwelling in this fleſhly Tabernacle of more value than all earthly things, which muſt live to all eternity, when this world ſhall lie in white Aſhes. A Soul, for which Jeſus Chriſt ſhed his precious and invaluable Blood: I was ſent into this World to provide for this Soul; indeed

indeed, God hath alſo committed to me the care of my body, but (as one happily expreſſes it) with this difference: A Maſter commits two things to a Servant, the Child and the Childs cloaths; will the Maſter thank that Servant, if he plead, I have kept the cloaths, but I have neglected the life of the Child.

Gospel Glaſs, p. 3.

Arg. 4. The fourth Argument is drawn from the ſmalneſs of the ſin. 'Tis but a little one, a ſmall matter, a trifle; who ſhould ſtand upon ſuch niceties?

This Argument may be retorted three ways.

1. But is the Majeſty of Heaven, a little one too? If I commit this ſin, I muſt offend and wrong a great God, *Iſa.* 40. 15. 16, 17, 22.

2. Is there any little Hell to torment little ſinners in? Are not the leaſt ſinners there filled with the fulneſs of wrath? O there is great wrath treaſured up for ſuch as the World counts little ſinners.

3. The leſs the ſin, the leſs the inducement to commit it. What, ſhall I break with God for a trifle? Deſtroy my peace, wound my Conſcience, grieve my ſpirit, and all this for nothing? Oh what madneſs is this?

Arg.

Arg. 5. A fifth Argument is drawn from the grace of God, and hopes of pardon: Come, God will pass by this as an infirmity, he will not be extream to mark it.

But stay my heart.

1. Where do I find a promise of mercy to presumptuous sinners? Indeed, for involuntary surprisals, unavoidable, and lamented infirmities, there is a pardon of course; but where is the promise to a daring sinner, that sins upon a presumption of pardon? Pause a while, my Soul, upon that Scripture, *Numb.* 15.27,30. *And if a Soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a She-goat of the first year for a Sin-offering, &c. But the Soul that doth ought presumptuously, the same reproacheth the Lord, and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.*

2. If God be a God of so much mercy, how can I abuse so good a God? Shall I take so glorious an attribute as the mercy of God is, and abuse it unto sin? Shall I wrong him, because he is good? Or should not rather the goodness of God lead me to repentance, *Rom.* 2.4. *There is mercy with thee, that thou maist be feared, Psal.* 130.4.

Arg. 6. Lastly, Sometimes Satan incou-

courages to ſin from the examples of good and holy men, thus, and thus they have ſinned, and been reſtored, therefore this may conſiſt with grace; and thou be ſaved nevertheleſs. The danger of this temptation is avoided, and the heart ſecured, by retorting the argument theſe three ways.

1. Though good men may commit the ſame ſin materially, which I am tempted to, yet did ever any good man venture to ſin, upon ſuch a ground and incouragement as this.

2. Did God record theſe examples for my imitation, or for my warning? are they ſet up as Sea-marks, that I might avoid the Rocks upon which they ſplit? 1 *Cor.* 10. 6. *Now theſe were our examples, to the intent we ſhould not luſt after the evil things as they alſo luſted.*

3. Am I willing to feel what they felt for ſin? O I dare not follow them in the ways of ſin! *quia me veſtigia terrent*: Leaſt God plunge me into the deeps of horrour, into which he caſt them.

Thus learn to keep your hearts in the hour of temptation to ſin.

10. *Seaſon.* The tenth ſpecial Seaſon "to keep the heart with all diligence, "in the time of ſpiritual darkneſs and

" doubting when it is with the Soul, as it " was with *Paul* in his dangerous voyage, " neither Sun, nor Moon, nor Star " appears for many days: when by rea- " son of the hidings of Gods face, the " prevalency of Corruption, and the in- " evidence of Grace; the soul is even " ready to give up all its hopes and com- " forts for lost; to draw sad and despe- " rate conclusions upon it self; to call " its former comforts vain delusions, " its grace Hypocrisie. When the se- " rene and clear Heavens are overcast " with dark clouds, yea filled with thun- " ders, and horrible tempests; when " the poor pensive Soul sits down and " weeps forth this sad Lamentation, *My* " *hope is perished from the Lord!* now to " keep the heart from sinking in such a " day as this, to enable it to maintain " its own sincerity, is a matter of great " difficulty. The tenth case then will be " this.

Case. 10. *How the people of God in dark and doubting seasons, may keep their hearts from entertaining such sad conclusions about their estates, as destroy their peace, and unfit them for their duty.*

There are two general heads, to which the grounds of doubting our sincerity may

may be reduced. (1) Gods carriage towards the Soul, either in the time of ſome *extraordinary affliction*, or of ſome long and *ſad deſertion*. Or, (2) The ſouls carriage towards God: and here it uſually argues againſt the truth of its own graces, either, (1) From its relapſes into the ſame ſins, from which it hath formerly riſen, with ſhame and ſorrow. Or, (2) from the ſenſible declinings of its affections from God. Or, (3) From the exceſs of the affections towards creature-comforts and enjoyments. Or, (4) From its enlargements in publick, and often ſtraitnings in private duties. Or, (5) From ſome horrid injections of Satan, with which the Soul is greatly perplexed. Or, Laſtly, from Gods ſilence, and ſeeming denial of its long depending Suits and prayers.

Theſe are the common grounds of thoſe ſad concluſions: Now in order to the eſtabliſhment and ſupport of the heart in this condition it will be neceſſary.

1. That you be acquainted with ſome general Truths, which have a tendency to the ſettlement of a trembling and doubting ſoul.

2. That you may be rightly inſtructed a-

bout the fore-mentioned particulars; which are the grounds of your doubtings.

The general truths requisite for poor doubting souls to be acquainted with, are these,

1. *That every working and appearance of hypocrisie doth not presently prove the person in whom it is to be an hypocrite.* You must carefully distinguish between the *presence* and *predominancie* of hypocrisie: there are remains of deceitfulness in the best hearts: *David* and *Peter* had sad experience of it, yet the standing frame and general bent of the heart being upright: did not denominate them hypocrites.

2. *That we ought as well to hear what can be said for us, as against us*: It is the sin of upright hearts sometimes to use an over ridged and mercileſs severity against themselves: they do not indifferently consider the case of their own souls: it is in this case as *Solomon* speaks in another, *Prov.* 13. 7. *There is that maketh himself rich, and yet hath nothing; and there is that maketh himself poor, and yet hath great riches.* 'Tis the damning sin of the self-flattering Hypocrite, to make his condition better than it is: and it is the sin and folly of some upright ones

ones to make their condition worſe than indeed it is. Why ſhould you be ſuch enemies to your own peace? to read over the evidences of Gods love to your ſouls, as a man doth a Book which he intends to confute? why do you ſtudy to find evaſions, to turn off theſe comforts which are due to you? 'tis ſaid of *Joſeph* that he was minded to put away his eſpouſed *Mary*, not knowing that that holy thing which was conceived in her, was by the Holy Ghoſt: and this may be your caſe. A third truth is this,

3. *That many a Saint hath charged and condemned himſelf of that, which God will never charge him with, nor condemn him for.* Why haſt thou hardned our hearts from thy fear (ſaith the Church) *Iſa.* 63. 17. and yet the verſe before manifeſts, that their hearts were not ſo hardned: godly *Bradford* wrote himſelf an hypocrite, a painted Sepulchre; yet doubtleſs God acquitted him of that charge.

4. *Every thing which is a ground of grief to the people of God, is not a ſufficient ground of queſtioning their ſincerity.* There are many more things to trouble you than there are to ſtumble you: if upon every ſlip and failing through infirmity, you ſhould queſtion all that ever was

wrought upon you, your life must be made up of doubtings and fears: you can never attain a setled peace, nor live that life of praise and thankfulness, the Gospel calls for.

5. *The soul is not at all times fit to pass judgment upon its own condition*: To be sure in the dark day of desertion, when the Soul is benighted; and in the stormy day of temptation, when the Soul is in a hurry; 'tis utterly unfit to judge its estate: examine your hearts upon your beds, and be still, *Psal.* 4. This is rather a season for watching and resisting, than for judging and determining.

6. *That every breach of peace with God, is not a breach of Covenant with God*: The wife hath many weaknesses and failings, often grieves and displeases her husband; yet in the main is faithful, and truly loves him: these failings may cause him to alter his carriage, but not to withdraw his love, or deny his relation. *Return O backsliding* Israel *for I am married unto you.*

7. *Lastly, Whatever our sin or trouble be, it should rather drive us to God, than from God.* Pardon my sin, for it is great, *Psal.* 25. 11. Suppose it be true, that thou hast so and so sinned, that thou art thus long and sadly deserted; yet 'tis a false infe-

inference, that therefore thou ſhouldeſt be diſcouraged, as if there were no help for thee in thy God. When you have well digeſted theſe ſeven eſtabliſhing truths, if ſtill the doubt remain, then conſider, what may be replyed to the particular grounds of thoſe doubts. As

1. You doubt and are ready to conclude the Lord hath no regard or love for your ſouls, becauſe of ſome extraordinary affliction which is come upon you: but I would not have thy ſoul ſo to conclude till you be able ſatisfactorily to anſwer theſe three queſtions.

1. *Queſt.* If great troubles and afflictions be marks of Gods hatred, why ſhould not impunity and conſtant proſperity be tokens of his love? for *contrariorum contraria eſt ratio & conſequentia*: of contrary things, there is a contrary reaſon and conſequence: but is this ſo indeed? or ſaith not the Scripture quite otherwiſe? *Prov.* 1.32. *The proſperity of fools deſtroy them.* So *Pſal.* 73.5.

2. *Queſt.* Dare I draw the ſame concluſion upon all others that have been as much yea more afflicted than my ſelf? if this argument conclude againſt thee, then ſo it doth againſt every one in thy condition; yea, the greater the affliction

of any Child of God hath been, the more strongly the argument still concludes: and then woe to *David*, *Job*, *Heman*, *Paul*, and all as have been afflicted as they were.

3. *Quest.* Had God exempted you only from those troubles, which all other his people feel, would not that have been a greater ground of doubting to you than this? especially since the Scripture saith, *Heb.* 12. 8. *If ye be without chastnings whereof all are partakers, then are ye Bastards, and not Sons.*

O how is our Father put to it by froward Children! if he afflicts, then one cries he loves me not: if he exempt from affliction, others question his love upon that ground. Surely you have other work to do under the rod then this.

2. Or do you rashly infer; the Lord hath no love for you, because he hides his face from you, that your condition is miserable, because dark and uncomfortable, before you draw such rash conclusions, see what answer you can give to these 4. following queries.

1. Quer. *If any action of God towards his people will bear a favourable, as well as an harsh and severe construction, why should not his people interpret it in the best sense?*

And

And is not this such? may he not have a design of love as well as of hatred in this dispensation? may he not depart for a season, and not for ever, yea, that he might not depart for ever? you are not the first that have mistaken Gods ends in desertion, *Isa.* 49. 14. Sion *said, the Lord hath forsaken me, my God hath forgotten me;* was it so indeed? nothing less, *vers.* 15. can a Mother forget, *&c.*

Quer. 2. *Do you find the marks of an absolute, total and final desertion upon your own Spirits, that you are so apt to conclude yours to be such?* Do you find your hearts inclined to forsake God? have you lost your conscientious tenderness in point of sin? if so, sad characters appear unto you indeed: but if in this dark hour, you are as tender of sin as ever, as much resolved to cleave to God as ever; I cannot, I will not forsake God, let him do what he will with me, Oh no, I cannot. If your hearts work thus, it can be but a partial, limited and temporary desertion; by this he still keeps his interest in your hearts, a sure sign he will return and visit you again.

3. Quer. *Is sense and feeling a competent judge of Gods actions and designs.* Or may a man safely rely upon its testimonie

after

after so many discoveries of the infallibility of it? is this a sound argument? if God had any love for my soul, if it were not quite gone, I should feel it now as well as in former times; but I cannot feel it, therefore it is quite gone. Do you not know the Sun still keeps on his course in the Heavens even in full and close weather, when you cannot see it? and may it not be so with the Love of God? Read *Isa.* 50. 10. may I not as well conclude in Winter when the flowers have hid their beautiful heads under ground, they are quite dead and gone, because I cannot find them in *December*, where I saw them in *May?*

4. *Quer.* Think you the Lord cares not to break his Childrens hearts, and his own promise too? hath he no more, regard to either? if he return no more these must be the consequents, *Isa.* 57. 16, 17. *Heb.* 13. 5.

Well then, from Gods carriage towards you, either in affliction or desertion, no such discouraging, heart-sinking conclusions can be infer'd. Next let us see whether they may not be inferred from our carriage towards God: and here the principal grounds of doubting are such as these.

1. I have fallen again into the ſame ſin from which I have formerly riſen with repentance and reſolution, therefore my ſinning is cuſtomary ſinning, a ſpot that is not the ſpot of Gods Children; hence the upright ſoul trembles, upon this 'tis ready to affirm that all its former humiliations for, and oppoſitions unto ſin, were but acts of hypocriſie. But ſtay poor trembling heart:

1. Quer. *If this be ſo, how comes it to paſs that Chriſt put ſuch a favourable conſtruction upon the Diſciples ſleeping the third time, when he had as often reproved them for it? Mat.* 26. 40, 41. And how is it that we find in Scripture ſo many promiſes made not only to the firſt ſins, but alſo to the backſlidings of Gods people, *Jer.* 3. 22. *Hoſ.* 14. 4.

2. Quer. *Is not your repentance and care renewed, as often as your guilt is renewed?* Yea the oftner you ſin, the more you are troubled? it is not ſo in cuſtomary ſinning, the riſe whereof *Bernard* excellently diſcovers (1) (ſaith he) when a man accuſtomed to good, ſinneth grievouſly, it ſeems importable, yea he ſeems to deſcend alive into Hell. (2) In proceſs of time it ſeems not importable,

Lib. de Conſc. p. 1109.

ble, but heavy; and betwixt importable and heavy, there is no small descent (3) Next it becomes light, his conscience smites but faintly, and he feels not the stripes of it. (4) Then there is not only a total insensibleness of it, but that which was bitter and displeasing, is now become sweet and pleasing in some degree. (5) Then 'tis turned into custom, and not only pleases, but dailie pleases. Lastly, custom is turned into nature, he cannot be pulled away from it; but defends and pleads for it: this is customary sinning, this is the way of the wicked; but the quite contrary is our condition.

Quer. 3. *Are you sure from Scripture grounds that a good man may not relapse again and again into the same sin?* 'Tis true, as for gross sins, they do not use to relapse into them. *David* committed Adultery no more, *Paul* persecuted the Church no more, *Peter* denyed Christ no more; but I speak of ordinary infirmities: *Job*'s friends were good men, yet (saith he) *Chap.* 19. 3. *These ten times have you reproached me.* So then, no such conclusions follow from this first ground of doubting.

2. *The second ground is, the declining and withering of our affections to spiritual things*

things. O ſaith the upright Soul, if ever I had been planted a right ſeed, I ſhould have been as a green Olive-tree in the houſe of my God: but my branches wither, therefore my root is naught. But ſtay,

Quer. *May you not be miſtaken about the decay of grace, and fading of your affections?* What if they be not ſo quick and raviſhing as at firſt? may not that be recompenſed in the ſpirituality and ſolidity of them now? 1 *Phil.* 9: *I pray God your love may abound more and more in all judgment*; it may be more *ſolid*, though not ſo *ferverous*; or do you not miſtake by looking forward to what you would be, rather than backward to what once you were? 'tis a good note of *Ames*; we diſcern the growth of Grace as the growth of plants, wehich wperceive rather *creviſſe quam creſcere*, to have grown than to grow.

Quer. 2. But grant it be ſo indeed as you affirm, muſt it needs follow that the root of the matter is not in you? *Davids* laſt ways are diſtinguiſhed from his firſt, 2 *Chron.* 17. 3. and yet both firſt and laſt, a holy man. The Church of *Epheſus* is charged by Chriſt for leaving her firſt love, and yet a golden Candleſtick,

many

many precious Saints in that Church, *Rev.* 2, 2, 3, 4.

3. A third ground of these sad conclusions, is the access of our affections to some creature injoyments. I fear I love the creature more than God, and if so, my love is but hypocritical. I sometimes feel stronger, and more sensible motions of my heart to some earthly comforts, than I do to Heavenly Objects: therefore my soul is not upright in me. But stay Soul.

1. (Quer.) *May not a man love God more solidly and strongly, than the creature, and yet his affections to the Creatures be sometimes moved more violently and sensibly than towards God?* as rooted malice argues a stronger hatred, than a sudden, though more violent passion, so we must measure our love, not by a violent motion of it now and then, but by the depth of the root and constancy of its actings: because *David* was so passionately moved for *Absalom*, *Joab* concludes that if he had lived, and all the people dyed; *it would have pleased him well*, 2 *Sam.* 19. 7. but that was argued more like a *Soldier* than a *Logician*.

(2. Quer.) *If you indeed love the creature for it self, if you make it your end and*

religion

religion but a means, then the conclusion is rightly drawn upon you. But if you love the creature in reference to God and see nothing in it separated from him, though sometimes your affections offend in the excess, this is consistent with sincere love to God. To love the creature inordinately (*i. e.*) to put it in Gods room, and make it a mans end; this is the love of a carnal heart to love it immoderately, that is, to let out more affection to it than we ought, is sometimes the sin of the best hearts.

(3. Quer.) *Have not many Souls feared as you do, that when Christ and Creature should stand as competitors in some eminent tryal they should forsake Christ rather than the Creature, and yet when brought to that Dilemma have been able to cast all the world at their heels for Christ?* Many of the *Martyrs* had such fears, and thus they were satisfied: the prevalency of love is best seen at parting: there may be more love to Christ in thy soul than thou art now aware of; and if God bring thee to such a pinch thou mayst see it.

4. A fourth ground of these sad conclusions is from hence, that we find our hearts sometimes more straitned in private, than in publick duties. Oh if my

Soul

Soul were sincere, it's actings in Duty would be uniform. I fear I am but a *Pharisee* upon this ground; 'tis sad indeed we should at any time find our hearts straitned in private. But,

1. Quer. *Do not all thine enlargements in duty whether publick or private, depend upon the spirit, who is the Lord of influences, and according as he gives out, or holds back these influences, so art thou enlarged or straitned?* And what if sometimes he please to give that in a publick, which he with-holds in a private duty, as long as thy Soul is satisfied in neither without Communion with God, and the straitness of thy heart is indeed its burden; doth that argue thee to be an hypocrite.

(2. Quer.) *Dost thou not make Conscience of private duties, and set thy self as before the Lord in them?* Indeed, if thou live in the constant neglect, or careless performance of them, if thou art curious about publick and careless about private duties, that would be a sad sign; but when you have conscientiously performed and often met with God in them, it will not follow, you are insincere, because that communion is sometimes interrupted. Besides,

(3. Quer.)

(3. Quere.) *May there not be ſomething at ſome times in publick, which is wanting in a private duty, to raiſe and advantage thine affections.* God may ſometimes make uſe of the melting affections of them, with whom thou heareſt or prayeſt, as petty inſtruments to move thy affections; this advantage is wanting in private; therefore from hence (the caſe ſo ſtanding) no ſuch inference can be drawn.

5. Another ground is from thoſe horrid injections of Satan, with which, the Soul is greatly perplexed; by theſe I may ſee what an heart I have: Can Grace be where theſe are?

Yes, grace may be where ſuch thoughts are, though not where they are lodged and conſented to: Doſt thou cry out under the burden, enter thy proteſt in Heaven againſt them; ſtrive to keep up holy and reverend thoughts of God? Then 'tis a *rape*, not a voluntary *proſtitution.*

6. The laſt ground of theſe ſad concluſions, is the Lords long ſilence, and ſeeming denial of our long depending Suits and Prayers. O, if God had any regard to my Soul, he would have heard my cries before now! but I have no anſwer from him, therefore no intereſt in him. But ſtay, doubting Soul.

(Quer. 1.) *Have not many Saints stumbled upon this stone before thee?* Psal 31.22. *I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes, nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplycation:* So the Chuch, *Lam.* 3.44. Thou covereſt thy ſelf with a cloud that our Prayers ſhould not paſs through, *Jonah.* 2.4. Then ſaid I, I am caſt out of thy ſight, and may not you be miſtaken in this matter as well as they?

2. *Quer.* Though Gods abhorring and final rejecting prayer be an Argument of his abhorring the perſon that prayes, yet dare we conclude ſo from a meer ſuſpenſion of the anſwer? *God may bear long with his own elect that cry unto him day and night,* Luke 18.7.

3. Quer. *Can you deny but that there are ſome ſigns appearings in your Soul, even whilſt God ſuſpends his anſwer that argues your prayers are not rejected by him?* As, (1) Though no anſwer come, yet you are ſtill reſolved to wait; you dare not ſay as that prophane wretch did, 2 *Kings* 6.33. *This evil is of the Lord, why ſhould I wait for him any longer.* (2), You can clear and juſtifie God ſtill, and lay the reaſon becauſe of his ſilence upon your ſelves. So did *David*, *Pſal.* 22.2,3. *O my*

my God, I cry in the day time, and thou heareſt not; and in the night, and am not ſilent; but thou art holy, &c. (3) The ſuſpenſion of Gods anſwer makes you inquiſitive into your own hearts, what evils are there that obſtruct your prayers; ſo the Church, *Lam.* 3. 8. *He ſhutteth out my prayer*; and how doth this work, you may ſee *Verſ.* 40. *Let us ſearch and try our ways.* Well then, neither from hence may you conclude that God hath no love for your ſouls.

And thus I have ſhewn you how to keep your hearts in a dark and doubting ſeaſon from thoſe deſperate concluſions of unbelief. God forbid any falſe heart ſhould incourage it ſelf from theſe things, 'tis our unhappineſs, that when we give Saints and ſinners their proper portions, that each of them are ſo prone to take up the others part.

Caution.

11. *Seaſon.* "The eleventh ſpecial ſeaſon calling for this diligence to keep our "hearts is, when ſufferings for Religion come to an height; then look to "your hearts, *Matth.* 24. 8, 9, 10. *All "theſe are the beginning of ſorrows, and "they ſhall deliver you up to be afflicted, and "ſhall kill you; and ye ſhall be hated of all*

" *Nations for my Name ſake; and* THEN " *ſhall many be offended.* When ſufferings " for Religion grow hot, then bleſſed is he " that is not offended in Chriſt, troubles " are then at an height. 1. When a mans " neareſt friends and Relations forſake and " leave him, *Micah* 7. 5, 6. 2 *Tim.* 4. 16. " When a man is engaged alone. 2. When " it comes to reſiſting to blood, *Heb.* " 12. 4. 3. When temptations are pre- " ſented to us in our ſufferings, *Heb.* 11. " 37. 4. When eminent perſons of pro- " feſſion turn aſide, and deſert the cauſe " of Chriſt, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. 5. When God " hides his face in a ſuffering hour, *Jer.* 17. " 17. 6. When Satan falls upon us with " ſtrong temptations, to queſtion the " grounds of our ſufferings, or the Souls " intereſt in Chriſt, now 'tis hard to keep " the heart from turning back, and the " ſteps from declining Gods ways. The " eleventh queſtion then ſhall be this,

11. Caſe. *How the heart may be kept from relapſing under the greateſt ſufferings for Religion?* If the bitterneſs of ſufferings at any time cauſe thy Soul to diſtaſte the way of God, and take up thoughts of forſaking it, ſtay thine heart under that temptation by propounding theſe eight queſtions ſolemnly to it.

1. Queſt.

1. Queſt. *What reproach and diſhonour ſhall I pour upon Chriſt and Religion, by deſerting him at ſuch a time as this?* This will proclaim to all the World, that how much ſoever I have boaſted of the Promiſes, yet when it comes to the tryal, I dare hazard nothing upon the credit of them; and how will this open the mouths of Chriſts enemies to blaſpheme? O better had I never been born, than that worthy Name ſhould be blaſphemed through me! Shall I furniſh the triumphs of the uncircumciſed? Shall I make mirth in Hell? O, if I did but value the Name of Chriſt, as much as many a wicked man values his own name! I would never endure to ſee it expoſed to ſuch contempt. Will proud duſt and aſhes venture death, yea Hell, rather than a blot upon their name? And ſhall I venture nothing to ſalve the honor and reputation of Chriſt.

2. Queſt. *Dare I violate my Conſcience to ſave my fleſh? who ſhall comfort me when Conſcience wounds me?* What comfort is there in Life, Liberty, or Friends, when Peace is taken away from the inner man? When *Conſtantius* threatned to cut off *Samoſatenus* his right hand, if he would ſubſcribe ſomewhat that was againſt

his Conſcience, he held up both his hands to the Meſſenger that was ſent, ſaying, He ſhall cut off both, rather than I will do it. Farewell all peace, Joy, and comfort, from that day forward; had *Zimri peace that ſlew his Maſter?* ſaid *Jeſabel.* So ſay I here, Had *Judas* peace? Had *Spira* peace? and ſhall you have peace, if you tread in their ſteps? O Conſider what you do!

3. Queſt. *Is not the publick intereſt of Chriſt and Religion, infinitely more than any private intereſt of my own?* 'Tis a famous paſſage that of *Tereutius*, Captain to *Adrian* the Emperour, he preſented a petition to *Adrian*, that the Chriſtians might have a Temple by themſelves to worſhip God apart from the *Arrians*; the Emperor tore his petition, and threw it away, bidding him to ask ſomewhat for himſelf, and it ſhould be granted: But he modeſtly gathered up the pieces of his Petition again, and told him, *If he could not be heard in Gods cauſe, he would never ask any thing for himſelf.* Yea, even *Tully*, though an Heathen, could ſay, *Ne immortalitatem quidem contra rem publicam:* He would not accept even of Immortality it ſelf againſt the Commonwealth. Oh, if we had more publick, we ſhould not

have

have ſuch cowardly ſpirits.

4. Queſt. *Did Jeſus Chriſt ſerve me ſo, when for my ſake he expoſes himſelf to far greater ſufferings than can be before me:* His ſufferings were great indeed, he ſuffered from all hands, in all his Offices in every Member, not only in his Body, but in his Soul; yea, the ſufferings of his Soul, were the very Soul of his ſufferings; witneſs the Bloody Sweat in the Garden, witneſs the heart-melting, and Heaven-rending out-cry upon the Croſs, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* And he yet flinched not, *He endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame.* Alas! what are my ſufferings compared with Chriſts? He hath drunk up all that Vinegar and Gall that would make my ſufferings bitter. When one of the Martys was asked, why he was ſo merry at his death? Oh ſaid he! It is becauſe the Soul of Chriſt was ſo heavy at his death. Did Chriſt bear ſuch a burden for me, with unbroken patience and conſtancy? And ſhall I ſhrink back for momentary and light afflictions for him?

5. Queſt. *Is not eternal life worth the ſuffering of a moments pain?* If I ſuffer with him, I ſhall raign with him. O how will men venture life and limbs for a fading

Crown, ſwim through Seas of Blood to a Throne? And will I venture nothing? Suffer nothing for the Crown of Glory that fadeth not away? My dog will follow my Horſes heels from morning to night, take many a weary ſtep through mire and dirt, rather than leave me, though at night all he gets by it, is but bones and blows. If my Soul had any true greatneſs, any ſparks of generoſity in it, how would it deſpiſe the ſufferings of the way, for the glory of the End! How would it break down all difficulties before it, whilſt by an Eye of Faith, it ſees the forerunner who is already entred, ſtanding, as it were, upon the Walls of Heaven, with the Crown in his hand, ſaying, He that overcometh, ſhall inherit all things. Come on then, my Soul, come on, there is eternal life laid up for them that by patient continuance in well doing, ſeek for glory, honour, and immortality, *Rom.* 2. 7.

6. Queſt. *Can I ſo eaſily caſt off the Society and company of Saints, and give the right hand of fellowſhip to the wicked?* How can I part with ſuch lovely companions as theſe have been? How often have I been benefitted by their counſel? *Ezra.* 10.3. How often refreſhed, warmed, and

and quickned by their company? *Eccleſ.* 4. 10, 11. How often have I faſted and prayed with them? What ſweet counſel have I taken with them, and gone to the Houſe of God in company? And ſhall I now ſhake hands with them, and ſay, Farewell all ye Saints for ever, I ſhall never be among you more? come drunkards, ſwearers, blaſphemers, perſecutors, you ſhall be my everlaſting companions? O rather let my body and ſoul be rent aſunder, than that ever I ſhould ſay thus to the excellent of the Earth, in whom is all my delight.

7. Queſt. *Have I ſeriouſly conſidered the terrible Scripture Comminations againſt back-ſliders?* O my heart! dareſt thou turn back upon the very points of ſuch threatnings as theſe? *Jer.* 5. 6. *Thus ſaith the Lord, curſed be the man that truſteth in man, and maketh fleſh his arm, and whoſe heart departeth from the Lord; for he ſhall be like the Heathen in the Deſart, and ſhall not ſee when good cometh*; i. e. *the curſe of God ſhall wither him root and branch.* And Heb. 14. 26, 27. *If we ſin wilfully after we have received the knowledg of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſins, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgement, and fiery indignation, which ſhall de-*

vour

your the adverſaries: And again, *Verſe* 38. *If any man draw back, my Soul ſhall have no pleaſure in him.* As if he ſhould ſay, *Take him World, take him Devil for your own, I have no delight in him.* O, who dare draw back, when God hath hedged up the way with ſuch terrible threats as theſe!

8. Queſt. *Can I look Chriſt in the face at the day of judgment, if I deſert him now?*

He that is aſhamed of me, and of my words in this adulterous and ſinful Generation, of him ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy Angels, *Mark.* 8.38. Yet a little while, and you ſhall ſee the ſign of the Sun of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven with power and great Glory; the laſt Trump ſhall ſound, the dead, both ſmall and great, even all that ſleep in the duſt ſhall awake, and come before that great white Throne, on which Chriſt ſhall ſit in that day. And now do but imagine thou ſaweſt the trembling knees, and quivering lips of guilty ſinners; imagine thou heardeſt the dreadful ſentence of the Judge upon them, *Go ye curſed. &c.* and then a cry, the weeping, wailing, and wringing of hands, that there ſhall

be

be. Wouldſt thou deſert Chriſt now to protract a poor miſerable life on Earth? If the Word of God be true, if the ſayings of Chriſt be ſealed and faithful, this ſhall be the portion of the Apoſtate: 'Tis an eaſie thing to ſtop the mouth of Conſcience now, but will it be eaſie to ſtop the mouth of the Judge then? Thus keep thy heart, that *it depart not from the living God.*

Seaſon. 12. The twelfth Seaſon of looking diligently to our hearts, and keeping them with greateſt care, is the time of ſickneſs. "When a Child of God draws "nigh to eternity; when there are but "a few ſands more in the upper part of "his Glaſs to run down, now Satan bu- "ſily beſtirs himſelf; of him it may be "ſaid, as of the Natural Serpent, *Nun-* "*quam niſi moriens producitur in longum*; "he is never ſeen at his full length till dy- "ing; and now his great deſign, ſince he "cannot win the Soul from God, is to "diſcourage, and make it unwilling to "go to God; though the gracious ſoul "with *Jacob*, ſhould then rouſe up it ſelf "upon a dying bed, and rejoice, that the "marriage day of the Lamb is now al- "moſt come, though it ſhould then ſay "with dying *Auſtin*, *Vivere renuo ut*

"*Chriſto*

" *Chriſto viam*, I deſpiſe life to be with " Chriſt; or as dying *Millius*, when one " asked him, whether he were willing to " die? O ſaid he! *Illius eſt nolle mori* " *qui nolit ire ad Chriſtum*, Let him be un- " willing to die, who is unwilling to go " to Chriſt. But O! what ſhrinking from " death? what loathneſs to depart, may " ſometimes (indeed too frequently) be " obſerved in the People of God? How " loath are ſome of them to take death by " the cold hand? If ſuch a liberty were " indulged to us, not to be diſſolved " till we diſſolve our ſelves; when ſhould " we ſay with St. *Paul*, *I deſire to be diſ-* " *ſolved?* Well then, the laſt caſe ſhall be this.

Caſe. 12. *How the people of God in times of ſickneſs, may get their hearts looſe from all earthly engagements, and perſwade them into a willingneſs to die.*

And there are ſeven Arguments which I ſhall urge upon the people of God at ſuch a time as this, to make them chearfully entertain the Meſſengers of Death, and die as well as live like Saints, and the firſt is this.

1. Argu. *Firſt the harmleſneſs of death to the People of God.* Though it keeps its dart, it hath loſt its ſting: A Saint (to allude

allude to that, *Iſa.* 11. 8.) *May play upon the hole of the Aſpe, and put his hand into the Cockatrices Den.* Death is the Cockatrice or Aſpe; the Grave is the hole or Den. A Saint need not fear to put his hand boldly into it; it hath left and loſt its ſting in the ſides of Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 15. 55. *O Death! where is thy ſting*, why art thou affraid, O Saint! that this ſickneſs may be thy death, as long as thou knoweſt that the death of Chriſt, is the death of death; indeed, if thou didſt die in thy ſins, as *Job.* 8. 21. If death as a King did reign over thee, *Rom.* 5. 14. If it could feed upon thee as the Lion doth upon the prey he hath taken, as *Pſal.* 49. 14. *If Hell followed the pale Horſe, as it is, Rev.* 6. 8. Then thou mighteſt well ſtartle and ſhrink back from it; but when God hath put away thy ſins from thee, *As far as the Eaſt is from the Weſt*, *Pſal.* 103. 12. As long as there is no other evil left in death, for thee to encounter with, but bodily pain: As long as the Scriptures repreſent it to thee under ſuch harmleſs and eaſie notions, as the putting off thy cloaths, 2 *Cor.* 5. 2. *And lying down to ſleep upon thy bed*, *Iſa.* 57. 2. Why ſhouldeſt thou be afraid? there is as much difference betwixt death to the People of God,

God, and others, as betwixt the *Unicorns* Horn, when it is upon the head of that fierce beaſt, and when it is in the *Apothecaries* Shop, where it is made ſalubrious and medicinal.

Argu. 2. *Thy heart may be kept from ſhrinking back at ſuch a time as this, by conſidering the neceſſity of death, in order to the full fruition of God.*

Whether thou art willing to die or no, I aſſure thee there is no other way to obtain the full ſatisfaction of thy Soul, and compleat its happineſs, till the hand of death do thee the kind office to draw aſide the Curtain of Fleſh, thy Soul cannot ſee God: This Animal life ſtands betwixt him and thee, 2 *Cor.* 5. 6. *Whilſt we are at home in the Body, we are abſent from the Lord.* Thy body muſt be refined and caſt into a new mould, elſe that new wine of Heavenly Glory would break it. *Paul* in his higheſt rapture, 2 *Cor.* 12. 4. When he heard things unutterable, was then but as a ſtander by, a looker on not admitted into the company, as one of them; but as the Angels are in our Aſſemblies, ſo was *Paul* in that glorious Aſſembly above, and no otherwiſe; and yet even for this, he muſt, as it were, be taken out of the body, uncloathed for a little

little time, to have a glimpſe of that glory, and then put on his cloaths again. O then! Who would not be willing to die for a full ſight and enjoyment of God? Methinks thy Soul ſhould look and ſigh like a Priſoner through the Grates of this Mortality; *Oh that I had wings like a Dove, then would I flie away, and be at reſt.* Moſt men need patience to die, but a Saint that underſtands what death admits him to, ſhould rather need patience to live, Methinks he ſhould often look out and liſten on a death bed for his Lords coming; and when he receives the news of his approaching change, ſhould ſay, *The voice of my Beloved, behold he cometh leaping over the Mountains, skipping over the hills*, Cant. 2. 8.

Argu. 3. *Another Argument perſwading to this willingneſs, is the immediate ſucceſſion of a more excellent and glorious life.*

'Tis but wink, and you ſhall ſee God; your happineſs ſhall not be deferred till the Reſurrection; but as ſoon as the body is dead, the gracious ſoul is ſwallowed up in life, *Rom.* 8. 10, 11. When once you have loos'd from this ſhore, in a few moments, your Souls will be wafted over upon the Wings of Angels to the other ſhore

ſhore of a glorious Eternity. *Phil.* 1. 23. *I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt.* Did the ſoul and body die together, as *Berillus* taught? or did they ſleep till the Reſurrection, as others have groundleſly fancied? It had been a madneſs for *Paul* to deſire a diſſolution for the enjoyment of Chriſt. For if this were ſo, he enjoyed more of Chriſt whilſt his Soul dwelt in its fleſhly Tabernacle, than he ſhould out of it.

There are but two ways of the Souls living, known in Scripture, *viz.* The life of *Faith*, and the life of *Viſion*, 1 *Cor.* 5. 5. Thoſe two divide all time, both preſent and future, betwixt them, 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. If when Faith fails, ſight ſhould not immediately ſucceed, what ſhould become of the unbodied Soul? but bleſſed be God, this great heart-eſtabliſhing truth, is evidently revealed in Scripture, *Luke* 23. 43. You have Chriſts promiſe, *John* 14. 3. *I will come and receive you to my ſelf*, O what a change will a few moments make upon your condition! Rouze up dying Saint when thy Soul is come out a little farther, when it ſhall ſtand like *Abraham* in its Tent door, the Angels of God ſhall ſoon be with it: The Souls of the elect are as it were put out to the Angels

gels to nurſe, and when they dye, theſe Angels carry them home again to their Fathers houſe: If an Angel were cauſed to flie ſwiftly to bring a Saint the anſwer of his prayer, *Dan.* 9. 21. How much more will the Angels come poſt from Heaven to receive and transfer the praying Soul it ſelf?

4. Arg. Farther, *It may much conduce to thy willingneſs to dye, to conſider; that by death God oftentimes hides his people out of the way of all temptations and troubles upon earth*, Rev. 14. 13. *Write, from henceforth bleſſed are the dead that dye in the Lord.* 'Tis Gods uſual way, when ſome extraordinary calamities are coming upon the World, to ſet his people out of harms way beforehand, *Iſa.* 57. 1. *Merciful men are taken away from the evil to come.* So *Mich.* 7. 1, 2. When ſuch an evil time comes as is there deſcribed: *That they all lie in wait for blood, and every man hunts his brother with a net*: before that, God by an act of favour houſes his people before hand, doſt thou know what evil may be in the earth, which thou art ſo loath to leave? thy God removes thee for thy great advantage, thou art disbanded by death, and called off the field; other poor Saints muſt ſtand to it, and endure a great fight of afflictions.

'Tis observed that *Methuſela* dyed the very year before the flood, *Auguſtin* a little before the ſacking of *Hippo*; *Paræus* juſt before the taking of *Heidelburg*: *Luther* obſerves that all the Apoſtles dyed before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*: and *Luther* himſelf before the Wars brake out in *Germany*: it may be the Lord ſees thy tender heart cannot endure to ſee the miſery, or bear the temptations that are coming, and therefore will now gather thee to thy grave in peace, and yet wilt thou cry, O ſpare me a little longer?

5. Arg. *If yet thy heart hang back, conſider the great advantage you will have by death, above all that ever you enjoyed on earth.* And that (1) as to your communion with God. (2) As to your communion with Saints.

1. For your communion with God, the time of perfecting that is now come; thy Soul ſhall ſhortly ſtand before the face of God, and have the immediate emanations and beamings forth of his glory upon it; here thy Soul is remote from God, the beams of his glory ſtrike it but obliquely and feebly, but ſhortly it will be under the line; and there the Sun ſhall ſtand ſtill as it did in *Gibeon*, there ſhall be no cloudings, nor declinings

ngs of it. O how ſhould this wrap thy Soul with deſires of being uncloathed.

2. As for the enjoyments of Saints, here indeed we have fellowſhip with them of the lower form; but that fellowſhip is ſo diſſweetned by remaining corruptions, that there is no ſatisfaction in it; as it is the greateſt plague that can befall an hypocrite to live in a pure Church, ſo 'tis the greateſt vexation to the Spirit of a Saint to live in a corrupt and diſordered Church: But when death hath admitted you into that glorious aſſembly of the Spirits of juſt men made perfect, you ſhall have the deſire of your hearts; here you cannot fully cloſe one with another, yea, you cannot fully cloſe with your own ſouls; O what diſcords, jarrings, cenſurings, are here? what perfect bleſſed harmony there? in Heaven each Saint loves another as himſelf, they are altogether lovely. O my Soul haſt thee away from the Lyons dens, from the Mountains of *Bether*; from divided Saints, to thoſe Mountains of Myrrhe, and hill of Frankincenſe; thou art now going to thine own people, as the Apoſtles phraſe imports, 2 *Cor.* 5. 8.

6. *Arg.* If all this will not do, *Con-*

ſider what heavy burdens death will eaſe thy ſhoulders of.

In this Tabernacle we groan, being burdened. (1) With bodily diſtempers, how true do we find that of *Theophraſtus*, the Soul payes a dear rent for the tenement it now lives in; but glorified bodies are clogged with no diſpoſitions, death is the beſt *Phyſitian*, it will cure thee of all diſeaſes at once. (2) With the indwelling of ſin, this makes us groan from the very bowels, *Rom.* 7. 24. *But he that is dead is free from ſin*, *Rom.* 6. 7. Hath juſtification deſtroyed its *damning power*, and ſanctification its *Reigning power*? ſo glorification deſtroyes its very being and exiſtence. (3) We groan under temptations here, but as ſoon as we are out of the body, we are out of the reach of temptation; when once thou art got into Heaven, thou maiſt ſay, now *Satan* I am there where thou canſt not come; for as the damned in Hell are *malo obformati*; ſo fixed in ſin and miſery that their condition cannot be altred, ſo glorified Saints are *bono confirmati*, ſo fixed in holineſs and glory that they cannot be ſhaken. (4) Here we groan under various troubles and afflictions, but then the dayes of our mourning are ended.

God

God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes: O then! let us hast away that we may be at rest.

7. *Arg.* If still thou linger like *Lot in* Sodom, *then Lastly, Examine all the pleas and pretences for a longer time on earth.* Why art thou unwilling to dye?

1. *Object.* O I have many Relations in the world, I know not what will become of them when I am gone.

Sol. 1. If thou art troubled about their bodies and outward condition, why should not that word satisfie thee, *Jer.* 29. 11. *Leave thy fatherless children to me. I will keep them alive, and let thy Widows trust in me.* *Luther* in his last Will and Testament hath this expression, Lord, thou hast given me Wife and Children, I have nothing to leave them, but I commit them unto thee. O Father of the Fatherless and judg of Widows, *nutri, serva, doce,* nourish, keep and teach them: or art thou troubled for their Souls? Thou canst not convert them if thou shouldst live, and God can make thy Prayers and counsels to live and take place upon them when thou art dead.

2. *Object.* I would fain live to do God more service in the World.

Sol. Well, but if he have no more

vice for thee to do here, why ſhouldſt thou not ſay with *David*; if he have no delight to uſe me any farther, here am I let him do what ſeemeth him good: in this world thou haſt no more to do, but he is calling thee to an higher ſervice and imployment in Heaven; and what thou wouldſt do for him here, he can do that by other hands.

3. *Obj.* I am not yet fully ready, I am not as a Bride compleatly adorned for the Bridegroom.

Sol. 1. Thy juſtification is compleat already, though thy ſanctification be not ſo; and the way to make it ſo is to dye, for till then, it will have its defects and wants.

4. *Obj.* O but I want aſſurance, if I had that, I could dye preſently!

Sol. 1. Yea, there it ſticks indeed; but then conſider, that an hearty willingneſs to leave all the world to be freed from ſin, and be with God, is the next way to that deſired aſſurance; no carnal perſon was ever willing to dye upon this ground.

And thus I have finiſhed thoſe caſes which ſo neerly concern the people of God, in the ſeveral conditions of their life, and taught them how to keep their hearts in all. I ſhall next apply the whole.

I. *Uſe*

I. *Uſe of Information.*

YOU have heard that the keeping of the heart is the great work of a Chriſtian, in which the very ſoul and life of Religion conſiſts, and without which all other duties are of no value with God: hence then I ſhall infer to the *conſternation* of hypocrites, and formal Profeſſors.

1. *That the pains and labours which many perſons have taken in Religion, is but loſt labour, and pains to no purpoſe, ſuch as will never turn to account.*

Many great ſervices have been performed, many glorious works are wrought by men, which yet are utterly rejected by God, and ſhall never ſtand upon record in order to an eternal acceptation, becauſe they took no heed to keep their hearts with God in thoſe duties: this is that fatal rock upon which thouſands of vain Profeſſors ſplit themſelves eternally, they are curious about the externals of Religion, but regardleſs of their hearts. O how many hours have ſome Profeſſors ſpent in hearing, prayer, reading, conferring? and yet as to the main end

of Religion, as good they had ſate ſtill and done nothing, for all this ſignifies nothing; the great work, I mean heart-work, being all the while neglected: tell me thou vain Profeſſor, when didſt thou ſhed a tear for the deadneſs, hardneſs, unbelief, or earthlineſs of thy heart? thinkeſt thou, ſuch an eaſie Religion can ſave thee? if ſo, we may invert Chriſts words, and ſay, wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to life, and many there be that go in thereat: hear me thou ſelf-deluding hypocrite, thou that haſt put off God with heartleſs duties, thou that haſt acted in Religion as if thou hadſt been bleſſing an Idol, that could not ſearch and diſcover thy heart: thou that haſt offered to God but the skin of the ſacrifice, not the marrow, fat, and inwards of it; how wilt thou abide the coming of the Lord? how wilt thou hold up thy head before him when he ſhall ſay, O thou diſſembling falſe-hearted man? how couldſt thou profeſs Religion? with what face couldſt thou ſo often tell me, thou loveſt me, when thou knoweſt all the while in thine own Conſcience, that thine heart was not with me? O tremble to think, what a fearful Judgment it is to be given over to be a heedleſs

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and careleſs heart: and then to have religious duties inſtead of a rattle to quiet and ſtill the Conſcience!

2. Hence I alſo infer for the *humiliation* even of upright hearts, *that unleſs the people of God ſpend more time and pains about their hearts than generally and ordinarily they do, they are never like to do God much ſervice, or be owners of much comfort in this World.*

I may ſay of that Chriſtian that is remiſs and careleſs in keeping his heart, as *Jacob* ſaid of *Reuben*, *Thou ſhalt not excel*; It grieves me to ſee how many Chriſtians there are that go up and down dejected and complaining that live at a poor low rate, both of ſervice and comfort, and how can they expect it ſhould be otherwiſe as long as they live at ſuch a careleſs rate? O how little of their time is ſpent in the cloſet, in ſearching, humbling and quickning their hearts?

You ſay your hearts are dead; and do you wonder they are ſo as long as you keep them not with the Fountain of life? if your bodies had been dieted as your Souls have been, they would have been dead too; never expect better hearts till you take more pains with them; *qui fugit molam, fugit farinam:*

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he that will not have the *ſweat*, muſt not expect the *ſweet* of Religion.

O Chriſtians! I fear your zeal and ſtrength hath run in the wrong channel: I fear moſt of us may take up the Churches complaint, *Cant.* 1. 6. *They have made me the Keeper of Vineyards, but mine own Vineyards have I not kept.* Two things have eaten up the time and ſtrength of the Profeſſors of this Generation, and ſadly diverted them from heart-work. (1.) Fruitleſs controverſies ſtarted by Sathan, I doubt not to this very purpoſe, to take us off from practical godlineſs, to make us puzzle our *heads*, when we ſhould be ſearching our *hearts*. O how little have we minded that of the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 13. 9. *'Tis a good thing that the heart be eſtabliſhed with grace, and not with meats*, (*i. e.*) with diſputes and controverſies about meats, *which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.*

O how much better is it to ſee men *live exactly*, than to hear them *diſpute ſubtilly*; theſe unfruitful queſtions, how have they rendred the Churches? waſted time and ſpirits, and called Chriſtians off from their main buſineſs, from looking to their own Vineyard? what think you Sirs? had it not been better if the queſtions

ſtions ventiled among the people of God of late daies, had been ſuch as theſe? how ſhall a man diſcern the ſpecial, from the common operations of the Spirit? how may a Soul diſcern its firſt declineings from God? how may a backſliding Chriſtian recover his firſt love? how may the heart be preſerved from unſeaſonable thoughts in duty? how may a boſom ſin be diſcovered and mortified, &c. would not this have tended more to the credit of Religion, and comfort of your ſouls? O 'tis time to repent, and be aſhamed of this folly! when I read what *Suarez* a Papiſt ſaid, who wrote many Tomes of Diſputations, that he prized the time he ſet apart for the ſearching and examining of his heart, in reference to God, above all the time that ever he ſpent in other ſtudies: I am aſhamed to find the Profeſſors of this age yet inſenſible of their folly; ſhall the Conſcience of a *Suarez* feel a relenting pang for ſtrength and time ſo ill imployed? and ſhall not yours? this is it your Miniſters long ſince warned you of: your ſpiritual Nurſes were afraid of the Rickets when they ſaw your heads only to grow, and your hearts to wither. O when will God beat our Swords into

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plowshares! I mean our disputes and contentions, into practical godliness. (2) Another cause of neglecting our heart hath been earthly incumbrances: the heads and hearts of many have been filled with such a crowd and noise of worldly business, that they have sadly and sensibly declined and withered in their zeal, love and delight in God, in their heavenly, serious, and profitable way of conversing with man.

O how hath this wilderness intangled us! our discourses and conferences, nay our very prayers and duties have a tang of it; we have had so much work without doors, that we have been able to do but little within. It was the sad complaint of an holy one, O Mr. *Strong.* saith he! 'tis sad to think how many precious opportunities I have lost? how many sweet motions, and admonitions of the Spirit I have posted over unfruitfully, and made the Lord to speak in vain, in the secret illapses of his Spirit? the Lord hath called upon me, but my worldly thoughts did still lodge in me, and there was no place within my heart for such calls of God! surely there is a way of enjoying God, even in our worldly imployments;

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God would never have put us upon them to our loſs. *Enoch* walked with God, and begat Sons and Daughters, *Gen.* 5. 19. He walked with God, but did not retire and ſeparate himſelf from the things of this life: and the *Angels* that are imployed by Chriſt in the things of this World (for the Spirit of the living creatures is in the wheels) they are finite creatures, and cannot be in a twofold *ubi* at one time, yet they loſe nothing of the beatifical viſion, all the time of their adminiſtration, for *Mat.* 18. 10. *their Angels* (even whilſt they were imployed for them) *Behold the face of their father which is in Heaven.* We need not loſe our viſions by our imployments, if the fault were not our own: Alaſs! that ever Chriſtians who ſtand at the door of eternity, and have more work upon their hands then this poor moment of interpoſing time is ſufficient for, ſhould yet be filling both our heads and hearts with trifles.

3. Hence alſo I infer for the *awakening* of all, *That if the keeping of the heart be the great work of a Chriſtian, then there are but few real Chriſtians in the World.*

Indeed, If every one that hath learned the dialect of Chriſtianity, and can talk like

like a Saint, if every one that hath giſts and parts, and by the common aſſiſting preſence of the Spirit can preach, pray, or diſcourſe like a Chriſtian; in a word, if ſuch as aſſociate themſelves with the people of God, and delight in Ordinances, might paſs for Chriſtians, the number then is great.

But alas! to what a ſmall number will they ſhrink, if you judg them by this rule! how few are there that make Conſcience of keeping their hearts, watching their thoughts, judging their ends, &c. O there be but few cloſet-men among Profeſſors! 'tis far eaſier for men to be reconciled to any duties in Religion then to theſe: the prophane part of the world will not ſo much as touch with the out-ſide of Religious Duties, much leſs to this: and for the hypocrite, though he be polite and curious about thoſe externals, yet you can never perſwade him to this inward work, this difficult work: this work to which there is no inducement by humane applauſe, this work that would quickly diſcover what the hypocrite cares not to know, ſo that by a general conſent, this heart-work is left to the hands of a few ſecret ones, and I tremble to think in how few hands it is.

II. *Uſe*

II. *Uſe for Exhortation.*

IF the keeping of the heart be ſo important a buſineſs, if ſuch choice advantages accrue to you thereby; if ſo many dear and precious intereſts be wrapt up in it, then let me call upon the people of God every where to fall cloſe to this work.

O ſtudy your hearts, watch your hearts, keep your hearts: away with fruitleſs controverſies and idle queſtions, away with empty names and vain ſhews, away with unprofitable diſcourſe and bold cenſures of others, turn in upon your ſelves, get into your cloſets, and now reſolve to dwell there: you have been ſtrangers to this work too long, you have kept others vineyards too long, you have trifled about the borders of Religion too long, this World hath detained you from your great work too long; will you now reſolve to look better to your hearts? will you haſt and come out of the crowds of buſineſs and clamours of the world? and retire your ſelves more then you have done? O that this day you would reſolve upon it!

Reader, methinks I ſhould prevai with

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thee; all that I beg for is but this, that thou wouldſt ſtep aſide a little oftner to talk with God, and thine own heart, that thou wouldſt not ſuffer every trifle to divert thee, that thou wouldeſt keep a more true and faithful account of thy thoughts and affections; that thou wouldſt but ſeriouſly demand of thine own heart, at leaſt every evening, O my heart where haſt thou been to day? whither haſt thou made a rode to day? if all that hath been ſaid by way of inducement be not enough, I have yet more motives to offer you; and the firſt is this,

1. Motive. *The ſtudying, obſerving, and diligent keeping of your own hearts will marvellouſly help your underſtanding in the deep myſteries of Religion.*

An honeſt well experienced heart is a ſingular help to a weak head, ſuch a heart will ſerve you inſtead of a *Commentary* upon a great part of the Scriptures; by this means you ſhall far better underſtand the things of God than the Learned *Rabbies* and profound *Doctors* (if graceleſs and unexperienced) ever did, you ſhall not only have a more clear, but a more ſweet perception and guſt of them; a man may diſcourſe orthodoxly and pro-

profoundly of the nature and effects of faith, the troubles and comforts of Conſcience, the ſweetneſs of Communion with God, that never felt the efficacy and ſweet impreſſions of theſe things upon his own ſpirit: but O how dark and dry are theſe notions, compared with his upon whoſe heart they have been acted? when ſuch a man reads *David's* Pſalms, or *Pauls* Epiſtles, there he finds his own objections made and anſwered: O ſaith he: theſe holy men ſpeak my very heart! their doubts were mine, their troubles mine, and their experiences mine. I remember *Chriſoſtom* ſpeaking to his people of *Antioch* about ſome choice experiences, uſed this expreſſion *Sciunt initiati quid dico:* thoſe that are initiated know what I ſay, experience is the beſt Schoolmaſter. O then! ſtudy your hearts, keep your hearts.

Mot. 2. *The ſtudy and obſervation of your own hearts will antidote you againſt the dangerous and infecting errours of the times and places you live in.*

For what think you is the reaſon that ſo many profeſſors in *England* have departed from the Faith, giving heed to fables: that ſo many thouſands have

been led away by the errour of the wicked, that Jesuites and Quakers who have sown corrupt Doctrine, have had such plentiful Harvests among us, but because they have met with a company of empty notional Professors, that never knew what belongs to practical Godliness; and the study of their own hearts.

If Professors did but give diligence to study, search, and watch their own hearts, they would have that ἰδιον στερεωμα that stedfastness of their own that *Peter* speaks of, 2 *Pet.* 3. 17. and this would ballast and settle them, *Heb.* 13.9. Suppose a subtil Papist should talk to such, of the dignity, and merit of good works, could he ever work the perswasion of it into that heart that is conscious to it self of so much darkness, deadness, distraction, and unbelief attending its best duties? 'tis a good Rule, *non est disputandum de gustu:* there is no disputing against taste; what a man hath felt and tasted, one cannot beat him off from that by argument.

3. Mot. *Your care and diligence in keeping your hearts will prove one of the best evidences of your sincerity.*

I know no external act of Religion that differ-

differences the ſound from the unſound profeſſor: 'tis wonderful to conſider, how far hypocrites go in all external duties, how plauſible they can order the outward man, hiding all their indecencies from the obſervation of the World.

But then, they take no heed to their hearts, they are not in ſecret, what they appear to be in publick; and before this tryal no hypocrite can ſtand; 'tis confeſt, they may in a fit, under a pang upon a death-bed, cry out of the wickedneſs of their hearts; but alas! there is no heed to be taken to theſe extorted complaints; in our law no credit is to be given to the teſtimony of one upon the rack, becauſe it may be ſuppoſed, that the extremity of the torture may make him ſay any thing to be eaſed; but if ſelf-jealouſie, care, and watchfulneſs be the daily workings and frames of thy heart, ſtrongly argues the ſinceritie of it, for what but the ſenſe of a divine eye, what but the real hatred of ſin as ſin, could put thee upon thoſe ſecret duties, which lie out of the obſervation of all creatures?

If then it be a deſirable thing in thine eyes to have a fair teſtimony of thine integrity, and to know of a truth that

thou feareſt God: then ſtudy thine heart, watch thy heart, keep thy heart.

Mot. 4. *How fruitful, ſweet and comfortable would all ordinances and duties be to us if our hearts were better kept?*

O what precious communion might you have with God every time you approach him; if your hearts were but in frame, you might then ſay with *David*, *Pſal.* 104. 34. *My meditation of him ſhall be ſweet.* That which loſes all our comforts in Ordinances and more ſecret duties, is the indiſpoſedneſs of the heart: a Chriſtian whoſe heart is in a good frame gets the ſtart of others that come with him in that duty: they are tugging hard to get up their hearts with God, now trying this argument upon them, and then that, to quicken and affect them, and ſometimes go away as bad as they came. Sometimes the duty is almoſt ended before their hearts begin to ſtir to feel any warmth, quickning, or power from it: but all this while the prepared heart is at its work; this is he that ordinarily gets the firſt ſight of Chriſt in a Sermon: the firſt ſeal from Chriſt in a Sacrament; the firſt kiſs from Chriſt in ſecret prayer. I tell you, and I tell you

you but what I have felt, that Prayers and Sermons would appear to you other manner of things than they do, did you but bring better ordered hearts unto them, you would not go away dejected and drooping. O this hath been a loſt day, a loſt duty to me, if you had not loſt your hearts it might not be ſo: if then the comfort of ordinances be ſweet, look to your hearts keep your hearts.

Mot. 5. *Acquaintance with your own hearts would be a Fountain of matter to you in Prayer.*

A man that is diligent in heart work, and knows the ſtate of his own Soul; will have a Fountain-fulneſs of matter to ſupply him richly in all his addreſſes to God; his tongue ſhall not faulter, and make pauſes for want of matter, *Pſal.* 45. 1. *My heart is inditing a good matter*; or as *Montanus* renders the original, my heart is boyling up good matter, like a living ſpring that is ſtill bubling up freſh water; and then my tongue is as the pen of a ready Writer; others muſt pump their memories, rack their inventions, and are often at a loſs when they have done all; but if thou have kept and faithfully ſtudied thine own heart, 'twill be

with thee (as *Job* speaks in another case) like bottles full of new Wine, that want vent, which are ready to burst; as holy matter flows plentifully, so more feelingly and sweetly from such a heart; when a heart-experienced Christian is mourning before God for some special heart-corruption, wrestling with God for the supply of some special inward want, he speaks not as other men do, that have learned to pray by rote, their confessions and Petitions are squeezed out, his drop freely like pure honey from the comb, 'tis a happiness then to be with or near such a Christian. I remember *Bernard* having given Rules to prepare the heart for prayer, concluded them thus *Et cum talis fueris memento mei*; and (saith he) when thy heart is in this frame then remember me.

6. Mot. *By this the decayed power of Religion will be recovered again among professors, which is the most desirable sight in this World.*

O that I might live to see that day! when professors shall not walk in a vain shew, when they shall please themselves no more with a name to live, being spiritually dead; when they shall be no more

more (as many of them now are) a company of frothy, vain and uſurious perſons, but the Majeſtick beams of holineſs ſhining from their heavenly, and ſerious converſation ſhall awe the World, and command reverence for all that are about them; when they ſhall warm the hearts of thoſe that come nigh them, ſo that men ſhall ſay, God is in theſe men of a truth.

Well, ſuch a time may again be expected according to that promiſe, *Iſaiah* 60. 21. *The people ſhall be all righteous.* But till we fall cloſer to this great work of keeping our hearts, I am out of hopes to ſee thoſe bleſſed days; I cannot expect better times till God give better hearts; doth it not grieve you to ſee what a ſcorn Religion is made in the World, what objects of contempt and ſcorn the profeſſors of it are made in the World.

Profeſſors, would you recover your credit? Would you again obtain an honourable teſtimony in the Conſciences of your very enemies, then, keep your hearts, watch your hearts; 'tis the looſeneſs, frothineſs, and earthlineſs of your hearts that hath made your lives ſo; and

this hath brought you under contempt of the World, you first lose your sights of God and communion with him, then your heavenly and serious deportment among men; and by that your interest in their Consciences: O then! for the credit of Religion, for the honour of your profession, keep your hearts.

Mot. 7. *By diligence in keeping our hearts, we should prevent and remove the fatal scandals and stumbling blocks out of the way of the World.*

Wo to the World (saith Christ) *because of offences, Mat.* 18.7. Doth not shame cover your faces? do not your hearts bleed within you to hear of the scandalous miscarriages of many loose professors? could you not like *Shem* and *Japhet*, go backward with a Garment to cover the shame of many Professors? how is that worthy name blasphemed? *Jam.* 2.7. 2 *Sam.* 12.13, 14. The hearts of the righteous sadned, *Psal.* 25.3. *Ezek.* 36.20. By this the World is fearfully prejudiced against Christ and Religion the bonds of death made fast upon their Souls, those that had a general love and liking to the ways of God, startled and quite driven back, and thus Soul-

blood

blood is ſhed: Wo to the World.

Yea, how are the Conſciences of fallen profeſſors plunged and even overwhelmed in the deeps of trouble? God inwardly excommunicating their Souls from all comfortable fellowſhip with himſelf, and the joys of his Salvation; infinite are the miſchiefs that come by the ſcandalous lives of profeſſors.

And what is the true cauſe and reaſon of all this; but the neglecting of their hearts? were our hearts better kept, all this would be prevented; had *David* kept his *heart*, he had not broken his *bones*; a neglecting careleſs heart, muſt of neceſſity produce a diſorderly ſcandalous life. I thank God for the freedom and faithfulneſs of a reverend Brother in ſhewing profeſſors their manifold miſcarriages, and from my heart do wiſh that when their wounds have been throughly ſearched by that *probe*, God would be pleaſed to heal them by this Plaiſter. O Profeſſors! if ever you would keep religion ſweet, if ever you hope to recover the credit of it in the World, keep your hearts; either keep your hearts, or loſe your credit; keep your hearts, or

Goſpel glaſs.

loſe

loſe your comforts; keep your hearts, leſt ye ſhed Soul-blood; what words can expreſs the deep concernments, the wonderful conſequences of this work? every thing puts a neceſſity, a ſolemnity, a beauty upon it.

8. Mot. *An heart well kept will fit you for any condition God caſts you into, or any ſervice he hath to uſe you in.*

He that hath learnt how to keep his heart lowly, is fit for proſperity: and he that knows how to uſe and apply to it Scripture promiſes, and ſupports, is fit to paſs through any adverſity: he that can deny the pride and ſelfiſhneſs of his heart is fit to be imployed in any ſervice for God: ſuch a man was *Paul*, he did not only ſpend his time in Preaching to others, in keeping others Vineyards, but he look'd to himſelf, kept his own Vineyard, 1 *Cor.* 9. 27. *Leſt when I have preached to others, I my ſelf ſhould be a caſt-away*: and what an eminent inſtrument was he for God, he could turn his hand to any work, he could dexterouſly manage both an adverſe and proſperous condition: I know how to abound, and how to ſuffer want; let the people defie him, it moves him not, unleſs to indignation;

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Let them ſtone him, he can bear it; *if a man purge himſelf from theſe* (ſaith he) (2 *Tim.* 2. 21.) *He ſhall be a veſſel unto honour, ſanctified and meet for the Maſters uſe, and prepared unto every good work.*

Firſt the heart muſt be purged; and then, 'tis prepared for any ſervice of God: when the heart of *Iſaiah* was purified, which was the thing ſignified by the touching of his lips with a Coal from the Altar. *Iſa.* 6. 7. then he was fit for Gods work; *here am I, ſend me.* ver. 8. a man that hath not learned to keep his heart, put him upon any ſervice for God, and if it be attended with honour, it ſhall ſwell up and overtop his ſpirit; if with ſuffering it will exanimate and ſink him.

Jeſus Chriſt had an inſtrumental fitneſs for his Fathers work above all the ſervants that ever God imployed, he was zealous in publick work for God, ſo zealous, that ſometimes he forgat to eat bread, yea, that his friends thought he had been beſides himſelf: but yet he ſo carried on his publick work, as not to forget his own private communion with God; and therefore you read in *Matth.* 14. 23. that when he had been labouring

ing all day, yet after that he went up to a mountain apart to pray, and was there alone, O let the keepers of the Vineyard look to their own Vineyards! we ſhall never be ſo inſtrumental to the good of others as when we are moſt diligent about their own Souls.

Mot. 9. *If the people of God would more diligently keep their hearts, how exceedingly would the communion of Saints be thereby ſweetned!*

How goodly then would be thy tents O *Jacob*, and thy Tabernacles O *Iſrael*! then as it is propheſied of the Jews, *Zech.* 8. 23. *Men would ſay, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is among you.* 'Tis the fellowſhip your ſouls have with the Father and with the Son, that draws out the deſires of others after fellowſhip with you, 1 *Joh.* 1. 3. I tell you, if Saints would be perſwaded to take more pains, and ſpend more time about their hearts; there would quickly be ſuch a divine luſtre upon the face of their converſation that men would account it no ſmall priviledge to be with or near them.

'Tis the pride, paſſion, and earthlineſs of our hearts that hath ſpoiled Chriſtian fellow-

fellowſhip; whence is it? that when Chriſtians meet, they are often jarring and contending, but only their unmortified paſſions; whence are there uncharitable cenſures of their brethren, but only from ſelf-ignorance? why are they ſo riged, and unmerciful towards thoſe that are fallen? but becauſe they conſider not themſelves, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Gal. 6. 1.* Why is their diſcourſe ſo frothy and unprofitable when they meet? is not this from the earthlineſs and vanity of their hearts?

My Brethren, theſe be the things that have ſpoyled Chriſtian fellowſhip, and made it become a dry and ſapleſs thing; ſo that many Chriſtians are even weary of it, and are ready to ſay with the Prophet, *Jer. 9. 2. O that I had a Cottage in the wilderneſs*, &c. *That I might leave my people and go from them!* and with *David*, Pſal. 120. 6. *My ſoul hath long dwelt with them that hate peace:* this hath made them long for the grave, that they might go from them that are not their own people, to them that are their own people, as the original of that Text imports *2 Cor. 5. 8.*

But now, if Profeſſors would ſtudy their

their own hearts more, watch and keep them better, all this would be prevented; and the beauty and glory of communion again reſtored; they would divide no more, contend no more, cenſure raſhly no more; when their hearts are in tune, their tongues will not jarr, how Charitable, pitiful, and tender will they be one of another, when every one is daily humbled under the evil of his own heart; Lord haſten thoſe much deſired dayes, and bleſs theſe counſels in order to them.

Mot. 10. *Laſtly, by this the comforts of the Spirit, and precious influences of all Ordinances would be fixed, and much longer preſerved in your ſouls than now they are.*

Ah! What would I give, that my ſoul might be preſerved in that frame! I ſometimes find it after an Ordinance! *Aliquando intromittis me Domine in affectum multum inuſitatum, introrſus ad quam neſcio dulcedinem, &c.* Sometimes O Lord, (ſaith one of the Fathers ſweetly) thou admitteſt me into the moſt inward, unuſual and ſweet delights, to I know not what ſweetneſs, which were it perfected in me I know not what it would be; or rather, what it would not be. But

alas!

alaſs! the heart grows careleſs again; and quickly returns, like water removed from the fire to its native coldneſs; could you but keep thoſe things for ever in your hearts, what Chriſtians would you be! what lives would you live! and how is it that theſe things remain no longer with us? doubtleſs it is becauſe we ſuffer our hearts to take cold again; we ſhould be as careful after an Ordinance or duty to prevent this, as one that comes out of an hot bath, or great ſweat is, of going out into the chill Air; we have our hot and cold fits by turns, and what is the reaſon but our unskilfulneſs and careleſneſs in keeping the heart.

'Tis a thouſand pities, that the Ordinances of God, as to their quickening and comforting effects, ſhould be like thoſe humane Ordinances the Apoſtle ſpeaks, that periſh in the uſing. O then, let me ſay to you, as *Job* 15. 11. *Do the conſolations of God ſeem ſmall to you?* Look over theſe ten ſpecial benefits, weigh them in a juſt ballance; are they ſmall matters? is it a ſmall matter to have thy weak underſtanding aſſiſted? thine endangered ſoul antidoted, thy ſincerity cleared, thy communion with God

God ſweetned, thy ſails filled in prayer, is it a ſmall thing to have the decayed power of godlineſs again recovered, all fatal ſcandal removed, an inſtrumental fitneſs to ſerve Chriſt obtained, the Communion of Saints reſtored to its primitive glory, and the influences of ordinances abiding in the Souls of Saints? if theſe be no common bleſſings, no ſmall benefits, then ſurely it is a great duty to keep the heart with all diligence.

The III *Uſe for Direction.*

THe next uſe ſhall be for Direction to ſome ſpecial means for the keeping of the heart; and there beſides what hath been hinted in the explication of the duty, *pag.* 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. to which I refer the reader and all thoſe directions throughout the whole appropriated to particular caſes and ſeaſons, I ſhall farther add ſeveral other general means of excellent uſe to this end, and the firſt is this.

1. Means

1. Means. *Would you thus keep your hearts as hath been perſwaded, then furniſh your hearts richly with the Word of God; which is their beſt preſervative againſt ſin.*

Keep the word, and the word will keep you: As the firſt receiving of the Word regenerated your hearts, ſo the keeping of the Word within you, will preſerve your hearts, *Col.* 3. 16. *Let the Word of Chriſt dwell richly in you.* Let it dwell, not tarry with you for a night, and let it dwell richly or plentifully; in all that is of it, in its commands, promiſes, threats; in all that is in you, in your underſtandings, memories, conſciences, affections, and then it will preſerve your hearts, *Pſal.* 119. 11. *Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not ſin againſt thee:* 'Tis the ſlipperineſs of our hearts in reference to the Word, that cauſes ſo many ſlips in our lives. Conſcience cannot be urged, or awed, with forgotten truths; but keep it in the heart, and it will keep both heart and life upright, *Pſal.* 37. 31. *The Law of his God is in his heart, none of his ſteps ſhall ſlide;* or if he do, the Word will recover the ſtraying heart again. *Mat.* 26. 57. *Then* Peter *remembred* (*the words of Jeſus*) *and wept bitterly:* We never loſe our hearts till

they have first lost the efficatious and powerful impressions of the world.

Means 2. *Call your hearts frequently to an account, if ever you mean to keep them with God.*

Those that put a stock into the hands of unfaithful and suspitious servants, will be sure to make short reckonings with them: *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, Jer. 17. 9.* O 'tis as necessary as sweet, that we and our reins; that is, we and our secret thoughts, confer together every night, *Psal. 16. 7.* We should call our hearts to account every Evening, and say, O my heart! where hast thou been to day? where have thy thoughts wandred to day? what account canst thou give of them? O naughty heart, vain heart, couldst thou not abide by the Fountain of Delights? is there better entertainment with the Creature than with God? the oftner the heart meets with rebukes and checks for wandring, the less 'twill wander; if every vain thought were retracted with a sigh, every excursion of the heart from God with a severe check; it would not dare so boldly and frequently to digress and step aside: Those actions which

are

are committed with reluctancy are not committed with frequency.

Mea. 3. *He that will keep his heart, muſt take heed of plunging himſelf into ſuch a multiplicity of earthly buſineſs, as he cannot manage without neglecting his main buſineſs.*

It cannot be imagined he ſhould keep his heart with God, that hath loſt himſelf in a wood of earthly buſineſs: take heed you do not pinch your ſouls by gratifying the immoderate deſires of your fleſh. I wiſh many Chriſtians could truly ſay what a Heathen once did, *I do not give, but only lend my ſelf to my buſineſs.* 'Tis ſaid *Germanicus* reigned in the *Romans hearts: Tyberius* only in their *Provinces*: though the world be in your hands let it not juſtle Chriſt out of your hearts. *Seneca.*

Take heed Chriſtian, leſt thy ſhop ſteal away thy heart from thy *cloſet*. God never intended earthly imployments for a *ſtop*, but rather for a *ſtep* to heavenly ones. O let not *Ariſtippus* the *Heathen* ariſe in judgment againſt thee, who ſaid, *he would rather neglect his means than his mind, his farm than his Soul.* If thy ſhip be over laden thou muſt caſt ſome over-

board: More buſineſs than thou canſt well manage, is like more meat than thou canſt well digeſt, which will quickly make a ſickly ſoul.

Means 4. *He that means to keep his heart, muſt carefully obſerve its firſt declinings from God, and ſtop it there.*

He that will find his houſe in good repair, muſt ſtop every chink as ſoon as diſcovered; and he that will keep his heart, muſt not let a vain thought be long neglected. The Serpent of heart-Apoſtaſie is beſt killed in the Egg of a ſmall remiſſion. O, if many poor decayed Chriſtians had looked to their hearts in time, they had never come to that ſad paſs they now are; we may ſay of heart neglects, as the Apoſtle doth of vain bablings, that they increaſe to more and more ungodlineſs, *Nemo repente fit turpiſſimus*, little ſins neglected will quickly become great and maſterleſs. The greateſt *Crocodile* once lay in an Egg, the greateſt oak was once but an Acorn; the firing of a ſmall train of powder may blow up all by leading to a greater quantity. Men little think what a proud, vain, wanton, or worldly thought may grow to: Behold how great a matter a little fire kindles?

5. Means,

5. Means. *Take heed of loſing the livelineſs and ſweetneſs of your communion with God, leſt thereby your hearts be looſed off from God.*

The heart is an hungry and reſtleſs thing, it will have ſomething to feed upon; if it enjoy nothing from God, it will hunt for ſomething among the Creatures, and there it often loſes it ſelf, as well as its end. There is nothing more engages the heart to a conſtancy, and evenneſs in walking with God, then the ſweetneſs which it taſts therein: as the *Gauls* when once they had taſted the ſweet wine of *Italy*, could never be ſatisfied till they conquered the Countrey where it grew.

'Tis true, Conſcience of duty may keep the heart from neglecting it, but when there is no higher Motive, it drives on deadly, and is filled with diſtractions; that which we delight in, we are never weary of, as is evident in the motions of the heart to earthly things, where the Wheels being oiled with delight, run nimbly, and have often need of trigging; the motions of the heart upward would be as free, if its delight in heavenly things were as great.

Means 6. *Habituate thy heart to ſpiritual meditations, if thou wouldſt have it freed from thoſe burdenſome diverſions.*

By this means you will get a facility; and dexterity in heart-work; 'tis pitie thoſe ſmaller portions of our time betwixt ſolemn duties ſhould lie upon our hands and be rendred uſeleſs to us. O learn to ſave, and be good husbands upon your thoughts: To this purpoſe, a neat *Author* ſpeaks, "Theſe "Parentheſes which happen to come between "the more ſolemn paſſages (whether buſineſs "or recreations) of humane life, are wont "to be loſt by moſt men, for want of a "due value for them; and even by good "men, for want of skill to preſerve them. "For though they do not properly deſpiſe "them, yet they neglect or loſe them, for "want of knowing how to reſcue them, "or what to do with them; but although "grains of ſand, and aſhes be a part, but "of a deſpicable ſmallneſs, and liable to "be ſcattered and blown away; yet the "skilful Artificer by a vehement fire, "brings numbers of theſe to afford him "that noble ſubſtance Glaſs, by whoſe "help

Boyls *occaſional Reflects*, Pag. 9. 10.

" help, we may both ſee our ſelves, and " our blemiſhes lively repreſented, (as in " Looking Glaſſes (and diſcern Celeſtial " Objects (as with *Telleſcopes*) and with " the Sun beams kindle diſpoſed Materials " (as with burning Glaſſes;) ſo when " theſe little fragments or parcels of time, " which if not carefully looked to, would " be diſſipated and loſt, come to be mana- " ged by a skilful Contemplator, and to be " improved by the Celeſtial Fire of Devo- " tion, they may be ſo ordered as to afford " us both looking Glaſſes to dreſs our " Souls by, and proſpectives to diſcover " Heavenly wonders, and incentives to " inflame our hearts with Zeal. Thus far " he.

Something of that nature I have under hand, for a publick benefit; if God give life to finiſh, and opportunity to produce it: Certainly this is a great advantage for the keeping of the heart with God.

IV. *Use for Consolation.*

I Shall now close the whole with a word or two of Consolation to all diligent and serious Christians, that faithfully and closely ply heart-work; that are groaning and weeping in secret over the hardness, pride, earthlinss, and vanity of their hearts, that are fearing and trembling over the experienced deceitfulness, and falseness of them, whilst other vain Professors eyes are abroad, their time and strength eaten up by fruitless disputes, and earthly employments, or at best by cold and formal performances of some heartless and empty duties. Poor Christian, I have three things to offer thee in order to thy support and comfort, and doubtless either of them alone mixed with Faith, is sufficient to comfort thee over all the trouble thou hast with thine own heart.

Comfort. 1. *This argues thy heart to be upright and honest, what ever thy other gifts and abilities are.*

'Tis uprightness of heart will comfort thee upon a Death bed, 2 *Kings* 20. 23.

Then

Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed to the Lord, saying, Remember now O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, &c.

I am really of his mind who said, *Si mihi daretur optio eligerim Christiani rustici sordidissimum et maxime agreste opus præ omnibus victoriis & triumphis Alexandri aut Cæsaris.* Might I have my wish, I would prefer the most despicable and sordid work of a rustick Christian, before all the victories and triumphs of *Alexander* or *Cæsar*. Yea, let me add, before all the elabourated duties and excellent gifts of vain Professors, before the tongues of Men and Angels; it will signifie more to my comfort to spend one solitary hour in mourning before the Lord, over heart-corruption, than many hours in a seeming zealous, but really dead performance of common duties, with the greatest enlargements and richest embellishments of parts and gifts.

By this very thing Christ distinguishes the formal and serious Christian, *Matth.* 6. 5. The one is for the street and Synagogue, for the observation and applause of men, but the other is a Closet man; he drives on a home trade, a heart trade:

Never

Never be troubled then for the want of those things that a man may have and be eternally damned, but rather bless God for that which none but the favourites, and darlings of Heaven have: many a one is now in Hell that had a better head than thine, and many a one now in Heaven that complained of as bad an heart as thine.

2. Com. *Know farther for thy comfort, that God would never leave thee under so many heart troubles and burdens, if he intended not thy real benefit thereby.*

Thou art often crying out, Lord why is it thus, why go I mourning all the day, having sorrow in my heart, thus long I have been exercised with hardness of heart, and to this day have not obtained a broken heart; many years have I been praying and striving against vain thoughts, yet am still infested and perplexed with them. O when shall I get a better heart? I have been in travel, and brought forth but Wind, I have obtained no deliverance, neither have the corruptions of my heart fallen. I have brought this heart many times to Prayers, Sermons, Sacraments, expecting and hoping for a cure from them, and still my sore runneth and ceaseth not. Pensive

Penſive Soul, let this comfort thee, thy God deſigns thy benefit, even by theſe occaſions of thy ſad complaints? For (1) hereby he would let thee ſee what thy heart by Nature is, and was, and therein take notice how much thou art beholding to free-grace: He leaves thee under theſe exerciſes of Spirit, that thou maiſt lie as with thy face upon the ground, admiring that ever the Lord of Glory ſhould take ſuch a Toad, ſo vile a Creature into his boſom. Thy baſe heart, if it be good for nothing elſe, yet ſerves to commend and ſet off, the unſearchable riches of Free-grace. (2) This ſerves to beat thee off continually from reſting, yea, or but glancing upon thine own righteouſneſs, or excellency, the corruption of thy heart, working in all thy duties, makes thee ſenſible to feel that the Bed is too ſhort, and the covering too narrow. Were it not for thoſe reflections thou haſt after duties, upon the dulneſs and diſtractions of thine heart in them; how apt wouldſt thou be to fall in love with, and admire thy own performances, and inlargements? For if notwithſtanding theſe, thou haſt much to do with the pride of thy heart; how much more, if ſuch humbling

ing and ſelf-abaſing conſiderations, were wanting. And laſtly, this tends to make thee the more compaſſionate and tender towards others. Perhaps thou wouldſt have little pity for the diſtreſſes, and ſoul troubles of others, if thou hadſt leſs experience of thine own.

Com. 3. *To conclude, God will ſhortly put a bleſſed end to all theſe troubles, cares, and watchings.*

The time is coming when thy heart ſhall be as thou wouldſt have it; when thou ſhalt be diſcharged of all theſe cares, fears, and ſorrows, and never cry out, Oh my hard, my proud, my vain, my earthly heart any more; when all darkneſs ſhall be baniſhed from thine underſtanding, and thou ſhalt clearly diſcover all Truths in God, that Chryſtal Ocean of Truth; when all vanity ſhall be purged perfectly out of thy thoughts, and they be everlaſtingly, raviſhingly, and delightfully entertained and exerciſed upon that ſupream goodneſs, and infinite excellency of God, from whom they ſhall never ſtart any more like a broken Bow. And as for thy Pride, paſſion, earthlineſs, and all other the matters of thy complaint and trouble, it ſhall be ſaid of them, as of the

the *Egyptian* to *Israel*. *Stand still and see the Salvation of God.* These corruptions thou seest to day, henceforth thou shalt see them no more for ever; when thou shalt lay down thy Weapons of Prayers, Tears, and Groans, and put on the Armour of Light, not to fight, but to triumph in.

Lord, when shall this blessed day come? How long? how long? Holy and True; My Soul waiteth for thee. Come my Beloved, and be thou like a Roe, or a young Hart upon the Mountains of *Bether*. *Amen.*

FINIS.

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